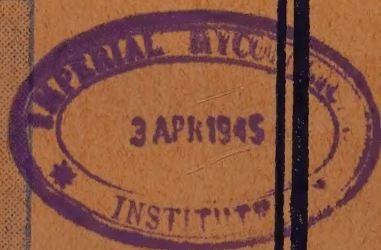




# A-REVUE AGRICOLE



## DE L'ILE MAURICE



NOV-DEC. 1944







# LA REVUE AGRICOLE

DE

## L'ILE MAURICE

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RÉDACTEUR : P. O. WIEHE

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MAURICE

THE GENERAL PRINTING & STATIONERY COMPANY LIMITED

T. ESCLAPON—Administrateur

23. RUE SIR WILLIAM NEWTON

1944

Comité de Direction

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Lorsque les articles seront accompagnés de schémas, ceux-ci devront être du même format que la revue (24 x 17 cms.) ou occupant une page ne pouvant être pliée que dans un sens seulement.

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NOTES ET COMMENTAIRES

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La Revue Agricole souhaite la bienvenue à M. Robert d'Avice de retour dans la colonie après plusieurs mois passés en Angleterre où il eut à s'occuper de plusieurs questions, notamment la production des levures-aliments.

A la suite de la nomination du Capitaine A.N. Coombes au poste de "Senior Agricultural Officer" du Département d'Agriculture, M. André d'Emmerez de Charmcy a été nommé "Agronomist" de ce Département. Dans la même division M. H. Julien occupe maintenant le poste de "Assistant Agricultural Officer" en remplacement de M. A. Valasois qui a pris sa retraite.

Le rendement moyen de sucre à l'arpent pour ces quatre dernières années a été de 2.51 tonnes en 1940, 2.50 en 1941, 2.52 en 1942 et 2.79 tonnes en 1943. En estimant la coupe de 1944 à 200,000 tonnes (voir plus loin, page 277 de la Revue) le rendement pour cette année serait d'environ 1.65 tonnes de sucre par arpent. A ce propos une analyse détaillée de la coupe de 1944 par M. A. de Sornay paraîtra dans la prochaine livraison de la Revue Agricole.

Le manque de pluie de la mi-octobre au 13 décembre a eu des effets désastreux sur les cultures vivrières faites en août, septembre et octobre. Il est estimé qu'environ 3000 arpents de maïs ont été détruits de la sorte.

La Revue Agricole félicite MM. A. Chasteau de Balyon, S. Belcourt, R. Noël, P. Robert, A. Menagé, A. de Chasteauneuf, P. Genève, L. H. Espitalier Noël, F. Staub et Jean Maurel pour leur succès à l'examen de Technologie Sucrière de "City and Guilds" tenu en mai dernier.

Dans le but d'améliorer la race laitière du pays, le Département d'Agriculture a reçu en octobre dernier 10 taureaux Friesland sélectionnés de l'Afrique du Sud. Après une période de quarantaine, ces étalons seront placés aux stations suivantes : Montagne Longue, Pamplémousses, Curepipe, Réduit et Beau Bassin.



## TEA IN MAURITIUS

1817 — 1944

A. NORTH COOMBES

Senior Agricultural Officer — Department of Agriculture.

" He in whose heart no history is enscrolled  
Cannot discern in life's alloy the gold. "

Whatever one's sphere of work, delving into history results in the better understanding of the tasks of the present and the problems of the future. Better still, a knowledge of things of the past may prevent the recurrence of mistakes which our forbears made and hoped we would learn to avoid. This holds good for agricultural history in general, and the case of tea in Mauritius provides an illuminating illustration.

The facts set down below may be of interest to those more particularly connected with the tea industry and may come as a surprise to others. How few of us know that, as far back as a whole century ago samples of tea grown and prepared in Mauritius were sent to London for report<sup>1</sup> ? And how many of us are aware that the first attempt to grow tea here was made 127 years ago ?

One cannot say for certain when tea was first introduced in Mauritius and to whom credit should go for its introduction. It appears that the plant was first brought to the Isle de France by order of Pierre Poivre<sup>2</sup> about the year 1770 Poivre being then the Island's Intendant. It is possible that it was introduced from China or Cochin-China and was first planted in Government House Grounds at Le Réduit. From there it seems to have spread a little to Quartier Militaire where, possibly, friends of the French Governors, seeing the plant at Le Réduit, obtained seeds and planted them in their own gardens. But all this early history is extremely obscure.

Poivre himself, and his successors, influenced by the craze of the time, were more interested in the propagation of spices, chiefly cloves and nutmegs, than in the cultivation of tea. Throughout the whole of the French occupation of the Island, the tea plant remained as a museum specimen of the vegetable kingdom and no more. To Sir Robert Townsend Farquhar, the first English Governor of Mauritius, a man who saw into the future

1. This tea was quoted in London at 3 shillings per pound and was sold in Mauritius at 4 shillings (Rs. 2.00). It compared favourably with the good teas of that epoch from China.

2. Œuvres Complètes de P. Poivre — Fuchs, Paris, 1797, p. 43 : " Parmi les plantes utiles qu'il a fait connaître à l'île de France, et qu'il y a cultivées lui-même ..... est le thé de la Chine..... "



and to whom Mauritius owes so much, was reserved the honour of ordering, about 1817, that young tea plants be collected and a small trial tea garden be created at Le Réduit. This task was entrusted to Victor Jaunet, a humble French gardener, who obtained enough plants and seeds at Quartier Militaire to plant about half an acre. Unfortunately, when Farquhar left Mauritius in 1821, this plantation was abandoned and official interest faded off.

But Jaunet, although knowing nothing about the preparation of tea, foresaw the benefit which might accrue to the Colony from the development of a tea industry. He had a small property at Trois Ilots, in the Flacq district, where he had raised two hundred tea plants at the same time as Farquhar's plantation was created. Jaunet tended his plantation with his own hands so that, although by 1840 he had about 15,000 bushes covering an area of about five acres, he could only look after one-fifth of that area.

There was nothing remarkable about Jaunet except his unbounded enthusiasm for tea and his persevering efforts to spread its cultivation in the Colony. He made numerous attempts to prepare green tea but failed until, one day, Wenceslas Bojer, the eminent Czech botanist who took a keen interest in Jaunet's efforts, showed him a report written in 1840 by C.A. Bruce<sup>1</sup> who was in charge of the Government of India's Assam Experimental tea plantation. In that report Jaunet discovered how green tea was made and, in 1842, he submitted his first samples to the Society of Natural History of Mauritius and applied for assistance, through, the Society, to Government. Jaunet did not ask much: only for one or two Chinamen versed in the manipulation and preparation of tea".

It is interesting to note that on the 21st December 1842, Sir William Gomm, the Governor, presented Jaunet with a gold medal, offered by the "Loge de la Paix" in commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the Lodge, for his meritorious efforts to establish tea cultivation in Mauritius.

On 3rd August 1843, Government acceded to Jaunet's request for assistance and a few days later two Chinamen whose wages were paid from public funds began work on Jaunet's plantation. At the same time, the Governor approved of a plan for the experimental cultivation of tea at the Royal Botanic Gardens, Pamplemousses. The subsequent fate of this official venture is not clear.

The two Chinese could not cope with all the work on the plantation so that further assistance was sought from Government in order that more labourers could be employed and the plantation extended. This assistance, consisting of a subsidy of £ 4 per month in addition to the wages already paid to the Chinese, was granted in August 1844. In return, Jaunet pledged himself to supply tea seeds free of charge for propagation in other parts of the Island.

1. C. A. Bruce — Report on the manufacture of tea and tea plantation in Assam, 1840.



One of Jaunet's Chinese was employed in the field, while the other was chiefly responsible for the preparation of the tea<sup>1</sup>. They introduced new methods of cultivation and processing, and Jaunet learnt much from them by observation, if not by direct instruction the Chinese being not at all inclined to communicate to anyone the "secret" of an art which they looked upon as belonging to them alone and not to be shared with others.

During the year 1844, they produced 200 pounds of tea, "good for local consumption or for exportation," from about two acres of tea bushes.

Jaunet's Chinese left Mauritius at the end of that year, going to India according to Adrien Despeissis<sup>2</sup> for the same purpose for which they had been brought to Mauritius, namely to implant the art of making tea there<sup>3</sup>.

The departure of the Chinese was a severe blow to Jaunet, now an old man, declining fast. Consequently, the Society of Natural History, in March 1845, again approached Government with a request to introduce two other Chinese versed in tea-making. However, the Secretary of State for the Colonies, Lord Stanley, had intimated that assistance would be continued to the tea "industry" until such time as it was "established on a firm footing" in the Island, and, on the 17th October 1845, Government enquired of the Society whether it was considered that the assistance to Jaunet should be continued. Unfortunately, the reply was that the grant could be stopped without inconvenience and Jaunet received the following letter, dated 18th November 1845, from the Colonial Secretary :

"His Excellency the Governor having had before him a report from the Natural History Society stating that the cultivation of tea has been ensured to the Colony, and that the object which the Secretary of State had in view in granting to you the assistance of Chinese or other labouring hands, has been attained, I have in consequence, been directed to acquaint you that the continuance of that assistance will cease with the present month....."

1. It is interesting to note that with the outbreak of the present war the preparation of green or Chinese tea was resumed in Mauritius by a few Chinese who purchased the leaves from, or worked in co-operation with, various planters. The production may be estimated as follows :—

1938-39	...	...	...	1,800 kilos
1939-40	...	...	...	3,000 "
1940-41	...	...	...	4,100 "
1941-42	...	...	...	5,000 "
1942-43	...	...	...	5,000 "

With the passing of the Tea Control Ordinance these producers will disappear as independent manufacturers, as green tea should only be produced under clean conditions in tea factories.

2. An eminent Mauritian who became "Commissioner for Tropical Agriculture" in Northern Australia.

3. It will be remembered that the Indian tea industry was then embryonic. The first sample of Assam made tea was sent to England in 1838.



This was too much for old Jaunet. A few months later he died and was forgotten, and tea cultivation — which had been ensured to the Colony — also faded into oblivion. For forty years no one took any interest in its revival. The cause of this neglect lay in the fact that, first, the assistance given, although given readily enough, was not such as to ensure the establishment of the industry on a firm basis and, secondly, in the colossal development of the sugar industry at that time. So rapid was the growth of the latter that everything else made way for sugar and the area under sugar cane, which averaged 26,000 arpents in the period 1821-30, increased to 110,000 arpents in 1851-60.

But the sugar industry was soon to face serious obstacles. First came, in 1854, the imposition in England, where Mauritius sugars sold, of differential duties calculated to protect the comparatively inferior sugars of the West Indies. Secondly, about 1885, Mauritius sugars began to feel the detrimental effects of competition with bounty-fed beet sugar. The Island's sugar industry then went through one of the worst crisis of its history and, as is usual when the sugar industry shows signs of distress, a cry went up for the development of secondary industries.

At this juncture, in 1884, under the Governorship of Sir John Pope-Hennessy, Honourable Lois Raoul, a member of the Colony's Legislative Council, suggested that Government undertake the development of secondary industries, including tea. An "Experimental Plantation Committee" was appointed to make recommendations.

The resumption of interest in tea cultivation had the whole-hearted support of Sir John Pope-Hennessy in person. He created an experimental tea garden at Le Réduit where, under his auspices Mr. Constant Vankeirsbilck, who was in charge of the garden, planted 12,000 tea plants. "These plants", said Sir John in January 1887 at the Annual Meeting of the Royal Society of Arts and Sciences, "are now flowering and I hope one day in the near future, I shall be able to offer you a cup of creole tea". This, he was able to do on the 28th January 1889 when the Royal Society of Arts and Sciences held its annual meeting at Le Réduit.

The Experimental Plantation Committee was set up in January 1885. It resolved, at its meeting of the 17th April of the same year, that experimental plantations of tea be made in the Colony and that Mr. Albert Daruty de Grandpré be requested to inspect, with Mr. Constant Vankeirsbilck such Crown lands as seemed most suitable for tea growing. A small tea plantation then existed at Curepipe. It was run until 1878 by Mr. Vankeirsbilck and, subsequently, by Mr. Joseph Jules Corson<sup>1</sup>. This plantation was situated on Crown Land Gouges which was acquired in 1883

1. Mr. Joseph Jules Corson was the grandfather of Mr. Raoul Corson, the present lessee of the Curepipe tea plantation. He left Mauritius in 1872 for Ceylon where he spent six years studying tea planting and manufacture. He introduced the tea variety known as Assam Hybrid to Mauritius. He died in 1891.



by Government to establish the experimental tea garden. In January 1886, tea seed was received from India and five acres were planted at the "Experimental Farm", as the garden was called. At the same time another small experimental plantation appears to have been made at Belle Rive.

In 1891, Mr. Auguste Jules Corson, son of Joseph Jules Corson, who had accompanied his father to Ceylon in 1872 returned to Mauritius to succeed his late father as tea "curer" and Manager of the Government's Experimental Farm. In 1892, a scheme, approved by the Plantation Committee, was drawn up by Corson for the cultivation of 20 acres of tea at the Farm. Fifteen acres were planted in 1893, raised from first class seed imported from Ceylon the same year and by 1895 there were 27 acres of tea in all at the Farm.

There was also a small factory the official description of which is worth preserving.

"The main building measures 68' 3" high by 38' 8" wide and 9' high  
"boarded in deal, covered in corrugated iron sheets and floored on an  
"area of 1,998 square feet in wood and on an area of 641 square feet in  
"stone.

"The doors and windows are provided with glazed sashes except 3  
"doors and 1 window.

"The interior of the building is fitted with a set of 6 masonry furnaces. It is also adapted to the main building a rough unfurnished  
"pantry of 15' long by 10' wide, tin-boarded on low sides".

This primitive building was dubbed factory and, in addition to the six masonry furnaces, contained the following equipment:— "3 withering tats, 12 sunny tats, 2 large tea bins, 12 zinc-lined boxes, 2 box sifters, 1 Sirocco drier of four trays and one small roller."

Although the experiment at the Farm was on a rudimentary and modest scale, the results obtained appeared to have acted as a stimulus on private enterprise and, by 1897, about 450 acres had been planted in various parts of the Island, the largest plantations being at Curepipe, Chamarel and Nouvelle France<sup>1</sup>.

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1. Tea was first planted at Nouvelle France in 1839 by Albert Daruty de Grandpré under the guidance of Joseph Jules Corson. From 1889 to 1892, 40 acres were planted. The area ultimately covered 69 acres, all of which was abandoned in the difficult years following the 1914-18 War. In 1930, 5 acres were reclaimed and gradually the whole of the area originally planted was again brought under cultivation. It was not until 1941, however, that new plantations were made.

At Chamarel the original plantations, laid out at the same time as at Nouvelle France, are said to have covered some 200 acres. The bushes were never pruned but were left to themselves. This plantation is now beyond reclaiming.

Among the other plantations made at that time the following may be mentioned: Cluny 50 acres, Madame Laurent 10 acres, Bassin Blanc 15 acres, Eau Coulée 4 acres, Midlands 4 acres.



The prospect of tea growing as a new industry was then stated to be most favourable and gave hope that it would be a success financially<sup>1</sup>.

As in 1845, it was then considered that the tea industry had been established and Government decided to withdraw from the Experimental Farm which A. J. Corson was allowed to lease in recognition of his services in assisting to establish the industry in the Island and with a view to continue to secure his services in an advisory capacity for the benefit of those who had begun other tea plantations.

A. J. Corson gradually increased his plantation at Curepipe to about 70 acres. In spite of the numerous difficulties which culminated in the almost total ruin of the tea industry after the first World War, Corson, whose whole life had been connected with tea doggedly went on struggling hard to keep afloat. And when, owing to circumstances referred to below, all other tea plantations had been abandoned, had it not been for Corson, the industry might very well have died out altogether.

It does not appear as if the area of 450 acres reached in 1897 was exceeded until 37 years later. What happened in that interval?

After 1900, the area under tea began to decline but, owing to the time-lag between planting and plucking, annual production increased, to reach a peak of about 35,000 kilos in 1905-09, and thereafter began to decrease until it finally fell to 10,000 kilos in 1922. Concurrently, the area plucked (as distinct from the total area standing which may be put at 390 acres) diminished, falling to about 160 acres in 1930.

During the same period the sugar industry, after a long spell of stagnation, once more began to prosper. Production of sugar increased, while the artificial prices — obtained as a result of conditions brought about by the war — soared to the fantastic height of 50 rupees for 50 kilos in 1920. Wages rose in proportion. Sugar could pay these wages, but tea could not. Not only was labour difficult to hire, but the labourers were making so much money that they worked fewer days a week and developed habits of laziness and luxury; many acquired plots of land and ceased to work for others.

Gradually all the tea plantations were abandoned, except Corson's whose production diminished greatly, falling from 15,000 kilos in 1917 to 4,000 kilos in 1927.

High wages were not the only difficulty. Local tea found it impossible to compete with imported teas the more attractive of which were now within the purchasing power of the prosperous peasantry. The quality of Mauritius teas was no worse than previously and on the score of quality

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1. But, at first, local tea did not sell at all. The duty on imported tea at that time was 9 cents per kilo and afforded no protection whatsoever to the new industry.



alone local tea could have held its own were it not for the altered conditions and the luxurious artificial standard of living following the war. But, prejudice against the locally produced article increased with the appearance on the market of so-called "tea" made from the coarsest leaves — in fact from any leaf but tea — by certain unscrupulous manufacturers who managed to secure sale contracts owing to the low price at which they could tender their "tea". Another factor was the deliberate attempts made to deceive an undiscerning purchaser by closely imitating the labels under which the better teas were sold. This unscrupulous competition resulted in a very bad tea being consumed in some quarters thereby acquiring for local teas in general a reputation of inferiority which lasted a long time<sup>1</sup>.

During this period of adversity numerous attempts were made to obtain Government protection for the local product in the shape of a higher duty on imported teas. Loans from the "Mauritius General Improvement and Development Fund" were also solicited. What was really needed was capital expenditure on a sufficiently large scale to place the industry on a footing which would have enabled it to improve its produce, increase its sales and lower its costs of production. But the industry was not then in a position to attract capital, all of which went into sugar.

At last the wheel of time brought about more settled agricultural conditions. Sugar prices fell and by 1926 the general level of wages had come down sufficiently to enable the reclaiming of small areas of tea. There was a small, but temporary, increase in production soon to be followed by the period of general depression which swept the world. The sugar industry found itself in difficulties once more and in 1930 the Colonial Office sent out experts to the West Indies and Mauritius to investigate. Sir Francis Watts came to Mauritius. He reported not only on sugar but also on the Colony's secondary industries. With regard to tea, he recommended the "calling in of an expert to advise on the reorganisation of the industry".

At the end of 1930 the late Commander Cyril Goolden, of the Anglo-Ceylon and General Estates Company, visited Mauritius. The coming of Goolden was of the utmost significance to the development of the tea industry. In his report, dated 20th January 1931, he reviewed the position of the industry and explored the prospects of growing tea in Mauritius on a large scale. He left detailed information with regard to the methods of cultivation and of manufacture. The soil and climate he found suitable, existing tea of good medium jat, and he was "certain that, under proper

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1. In this connection, the addition of vanilla to some local teas must not be considered to have been hit upon to mask any inherent inferiority in those teas. Vanilla was first added commercially to tea by Mr. Paul Corson who had noticed that a considerable number of consumers of Corson tea were in the habit of flavouring their tea with vanilla. In order to cater for this peculiar taste, the Corson factory put on the market, about 1919, a "thé vanillé" which met with instant success.









Bois Chéri Tea Factory in 1926.



Bois Chéri Tea Factory in 1930.



conditions, "it would be possible to make teas in Mauritius which would be readily "saleable on the open market",

The next, and perhaps the most important event in connection with the tea industry, was the acquisition in 1932, by Mr. Louis Larcher, of the Bois Cheri Tea Estate<sup>1</sup>. Mr. Larcher not only brought new blood to the industry, but, for the first time in its history, capital on an adequate scale was forthcoming. Money was spent liberally but wisely and the suggestions put forward by Commander Goolden — who visited Mauritius a second time in 1939 — were all implemented to culminate in the complete reconstruction and modernising of the factory in 1940 with the result that, from a derelict in 1931 it can now bear comparison with the most modern tea factories of the world<sup>2</sup>. In the field, progress has been on a par with progress in the factory. Thus, out of a total of 120 arpents constituting the area originally planted by the old Company about 70 were still unreclaimed in 1932. At the present moment the area cultivated exceeds 600 arpents.

The example set at Bois Cheri and, to a lesser extent, at Curepipe where Mr. Raoul Corson, the son of Auguste Jules Corson, had resumed the cultivation of his father's old plantations, acted as incentives. Moreover, the continuing plight of the sugar industry which, in addition to falling prices, suffered from the long and violent cyclone of 1931 and the severe drought of 1934, further encouraged a few planters whose lands were marginally situated for sugar production to change over to tea growing. Thus, the brothers Rampersad and Rajcoomar Ramdin gradually substituted tea for cane over a total area of about 440 arpents and so did Chan Lallmamode, the present lessee of Nouvelle France Estate. Their method of substitution, if liable to be frowned upon from a purely cultural point of view, was not ill-adapted to the financial condition of the day. Much of their tea was planted within standing crops of sugar cane without much detrimental effect either to the cane or to the tea itself except as regards spacing which was somewhat irregular. Several small planters<sup>3</sup> also turned to tea, while others who already had more or less abandoned patches of tea began to reclaim them.

In 1940, Government appointed a Committee to consider the practi-

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1. Tea was first grown at Bois Cheri in 1892 under the supervision of A. J. Corson, Messrs. Le Breton, Bour, Drouin & Co. began the plantation. In 1906 there were 120 arpents under cultivation. This fell to 90 arpents in 1918 and still more tea was abandoned as conditions became more difficult and production eventually fell as low as 3,500 kilos; it was 10,000 kilos in 1923 and had sunk to 6,000 kilos in 1932 when Mr. L. Larcher bought the Estate. Ten years later, the production exceeded 70,000 kilos.

2. The series of photographs accompanying this paper is evidence of the efforts made and the capital invested.

3. Small planters began to grow tea in 1906. At the time of writing 61 small planters from all classes of the community cultivate 163 arpents, while 12 planters cultivate all the other tea in the Island, namely 1,725 arpents.



cability of introducing a system of quotas<sup>1</sup> for imported teas, to examine and propose methods for regulating tea plantations and factories and, in general, to advance propositions for the furtherance of the interests of the local tea industry.

In the meanwhile, the Secretary of State for the Colonies intimated that Mauritius, not being a signatory to the International Tea Agreement<sup>2</sup>, would not be able to export tea. It became therefore desirable to encourage the local industry within the limits of expansion set by the Island's capacity of consumption.

Accordingly, Ordinance No. 37 of 1943 which provided for the control of the production and manufacture of tea in the Colony was promulgated. The Ordinance stipulates that from its coming into force no more tea shall be planted on any land in Mauritius except as may be permitted by the Controller of the Tea Industry.

No more tea is now planted but the increase in the area planted in the three years preceding the passing of the Ordinance has been on an unusually large scale and will prove very useful if an export trade eventually becomes possible or if local consumption increases beyond present expectations<sup>3</sup>.

That consumption will increase when production reaches a sufficiently high figure to make possible a lowering of the cost of production is likely. That it will increase to such an extent that the area now planted may prove insufficient is possible. But in view of the fact that the consump-

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1. Restriction of imports was first imposed in 1942, the quantity of tea to be imported during the year being fixed at 75% of the average annual imports for the three years preceding the outbreak of war.

2. The so-called International Tea Agreement resulted after several attempts to regulate the world tea market had failed. The Agreement was the outcome of a compulsory scheme in which India, Ceylon and the Netherlands East Indies co-operated. It came into operation for five years from April 1, 1933 and was followed by a new scheme for five years to March 31, 1943. Owing to the war no formal renewal could be arranged, but agreement was reached that the scheme should remain in being for two complete regulation years after the cessation of hostilities.

The International Tea Committee's policy has not been one of restricting output for the maintenance of high prices, but of regulating exports from the producing countries so as to provide a steady flow of ample supplies for all markets; and, recognising that increased consumption, rather than restriction of output, was the end to be achieved, it fostered and directed propaganda designed to cause greater world consumption of tea.

An impartial assessment of the results of such regulation leaves no room for doubt that it has benefited producers, distributors and consumers alike.

Other countries besides the three initial signatories have now adhered to the Agreement. (Notes taken from "Growth and Prospects of Empire Tea Production" by A.H. Fost in *Crown Colonist*, May 1944, pp. 345-347).

3. Figures of consumption and other statistical data are given as appendices to this paper.



Bois Chéri Tea Factory in 1934.



Bois Chéri Tea Factory in 1940.





ion per head of population does not appear to be increasing<sup>1</sup> some of the tea already planted may have to be abandoned unless it becomes possible to export.

The growth of the industry since 1930 is best illustrated by the following table which shows the increase in the area cultivated and in the quantity of made tea for the last thirteen years.

Year	Area Planted Arpents	Total Area under Tea Arpents	Production in 1000 kilos
1930	—	390	14.0
1931	—	890	14.0
1932	17	407	14.0
1933	15	422	14.7
1934	35	457	27.5
1935	34	491	39.0
1936	110	601	38.5
1937	143	744	43.5
1938	110	854	56.5
1939	74	928	76.3
1940	113	1041	69.5*
1941	230	1271	105.5
1942	330	1601	126.1
1943	287	1888	173.2

\* In 1940, Bois Cheri factory was reconstructed and could not deal with all the leaf available.

### Conclusion

As a result of his survey of the highlands of Mauritius, Commander Goolden advanced the opinion that almost the whole of it should grow tea well. After allowing for mountain and river reserves and mountain slopes, Goolden arrived at a rough estimate of 100,000 acres, at present mostly scrub, suitable for tea. This area includes Crown Forests.

The Island's small tea industry now occupies only one-fiftieth of that area which, when all local agricultural limiting factors are taken into consideration, is suitable for little else but tea and timber. If Mauritius is to go on supporting its fast increasing population<sup>2</sup>, a fully developed tea industry is probably one of the best answers. But its tea industry has had a period of infancy of 127 years and the question may well be put how long will it take to reach maturity?

1. A fact which is no doubt due to the present high price of tea.

2. Of nearly 600 inhabitants per square mile.



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*Acknowledgement*

The author thanks Mr. Paul Corson for information relative to the On repipe Tea Garden and Messrs. L. Larcher and J. Pilot for permission to reproduce photographs of Bois Cheri factory at various stages of development.

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  4. Mauritius Almanachs.
  5. Transactions of Royal Society of Arts and Sciences of Mauritius, 1849-1890.
  6. Transactions of Société d'Histoire Naturelle, 1841-48.
-

APPENDIX I  
AVERAGE ANNUAL  
IMPORTS — PRODUCTION — CONSUMPTION 1860-1943  
(Average of quinquennial periods)

Period	Imports 1000 kilos	Production 1000 kilos	Consumption	
			Total 1000 kilos	Per Head kilos
1860—64	13.0	—	13.0	.04
1865—69	14.7	—	14.7	
1870—74	18.2	—	18.2	.06
1875—79	23.6	—	23.6	
1880—84	24.4	—	24.4	.07
1885—89	28.2	—	28.2	
1890—94	35.0	5.0	40.0	.11
1895—99	45.8	5.0	50.8	
1900—04	39.8	32.0	71.8	.19
1905—09	48.5	35.0	83.5	
1910—14	66.0	30.0	96.0	.26
1915—19	91.3	21.0	112.3	
1920—24	140.8	14.0	154.8	.41
1925—29	177.5	15.3	192.8	
1930—34	177.2	16.8	194.0	.50
1935—39	170.4	50.8	221.2	.54
1940—43	99.2	118.6	217.8	.52



APPENDIX II  
IMPORTS — VALUE — DUTY — REVENUE  
Quinquennial Averages

Period	Imports 1000 kilos	C.I.F. Value 1000 Rs.	Duty Rs./kilo	C.I.F. Price Rs /kilo	Price ex Customs Rs./kilo	Revenue 1000 Rs.
1860-64	13.0	23.1	0.08	1.78	1.86	1.0
1865-69	14.7	28.4	0.08	1.93	2.01	1.2
1870-74	18.2	29.6	0.08	1.63	1.71	1.5
1875-79	23.6	25.1	0.08	1.06	1.14	1.9
1880-84	24.4	28.4	0.08	1.16	1.24	1.9
1885-89	28.2	46.2	0.08	1.63	1.71	2.3
1890-94	35.0	51.1	0.09	1.46	1.55	3.1
1895-99	45.8	67.3	0.10	1.47	1.57	4.6
1900-04	39.8	48.9	0.40	1.23	1.63	15.9
1905-09	48.5	73.7	0.44	1.52	1.96	21.3
1910-14	66.0	68.6	0.60	1.04	1.64	36.9
1915-19	91.3	174.9	0.60	1.92	2.52	54.8
1920-24	140.8	344.6	0.60	2.45	3.05	84.5
1925-29	177.5	412.5	0.48	2.32	2.80	85.2
1930-34	177.2	244.7	0.52	1.38	1.90	92.1
1935-39	170.4	278.4	0.61	1.63	2.24	103.9
1940-43	99.2	243.2	0.60	2.45	3.05	59.5

The duty has been "weighted" where necessary to obtain a more representative picture. At various times the duty on imported tea was as shown below, but it should be borne in mind that surcharges were imposed from time to time.

Period	Duty Rs./kilo
1860-88	0.08
1889-95	0.09
1896-99	0.10
1900-08	0.40
1909-26	0.60
1927-31	0.40
1932-34	0.60

NOTE. — Since 1935, the duty on Empire tea has remained at R. 0.60 per kilo, the duty on non-Empire tea being raised to R. 0.90 per kilo. This was intended to protect local tea against cheap teas mostly from China and Japan, but in fact no such result ensued as these teas were extremely low-priced so that they could still be sold at competitive prices on the Mauritius market.

† The imports for 1943 were 68,140 Kilos.

## APPENDIX IV

## DISTRIBUTION OF PLANTATIONS BY GRO

Localities	Under 1 Arp.		1 — 5 Arps.		5 — 10 Arps.		10 — 15 Arps.		15 —
	No. of Planters	Area Arps.	No. of Planters	Area Arps.	No. of Planters	Area Arps.	No. of Planters	Area Arps.	No. Plan
Curepipe ...	2	0.36	9	22.93	1	6.70	—	—	—
Nouvelle France ...	9	3.87	10	21.26	3	20.15	1	14.00	—
Pont Colville ...	2	1.38	4	9.75	—	—	—	—	—
La Flora ...	5	2.62	4	7.06	—	—	—	—	—
Grand Bois Mexico.	1	0.50	2	6.06	2	11.16	—	—	—
Bois Cheri ...	—	—	—	—	4	28.89	—	—	—
Other Localities*	—	—	—	—	1	6.50	—	—	—
Total ...	19	8.73	29	67.06	11	73.40	1	14.00	—

Planters Cultivating			Num
Less than 5 Arpents	...	...	46
5 to 10 Arpents	...	...	11
10 to 50 Arpents	...	...	5
50 to 100 Arpents	...	...	3
More than 100 Arpents	...	...	6
Total	...	...	73



# UPS ACCORDING TO AREA.

- 25 Arps.		25 — 50 Arps.		50 — 75 Arps.		Over 100 Arps.		Total
of ters	Area Arps.	No. of Planters	Area Arps.	No. of Planters	Area Arps.	No. of Planters	Area Arps.	Area. Arps
-	—	—	—	—	—	1	120.80	150.79
-	—	—	—	1	50.80	2	262.50	372.58
1	24.00	—	—	—	—	—	—	35.13
-	—	—	—	1	60.00	1	275.50	345.18
-	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	17.72
-	—	—	—	—	—	1	611.75	640.64
1	25.00	2	80.00	1	55.00	1	160.00	326.50
2	49.00	2	80.00	3	165.80	6	1430.55	1888.54

ber	Arpents
	75.79
	73.40
	143.00
	165.80
	1430.55
	1888.54

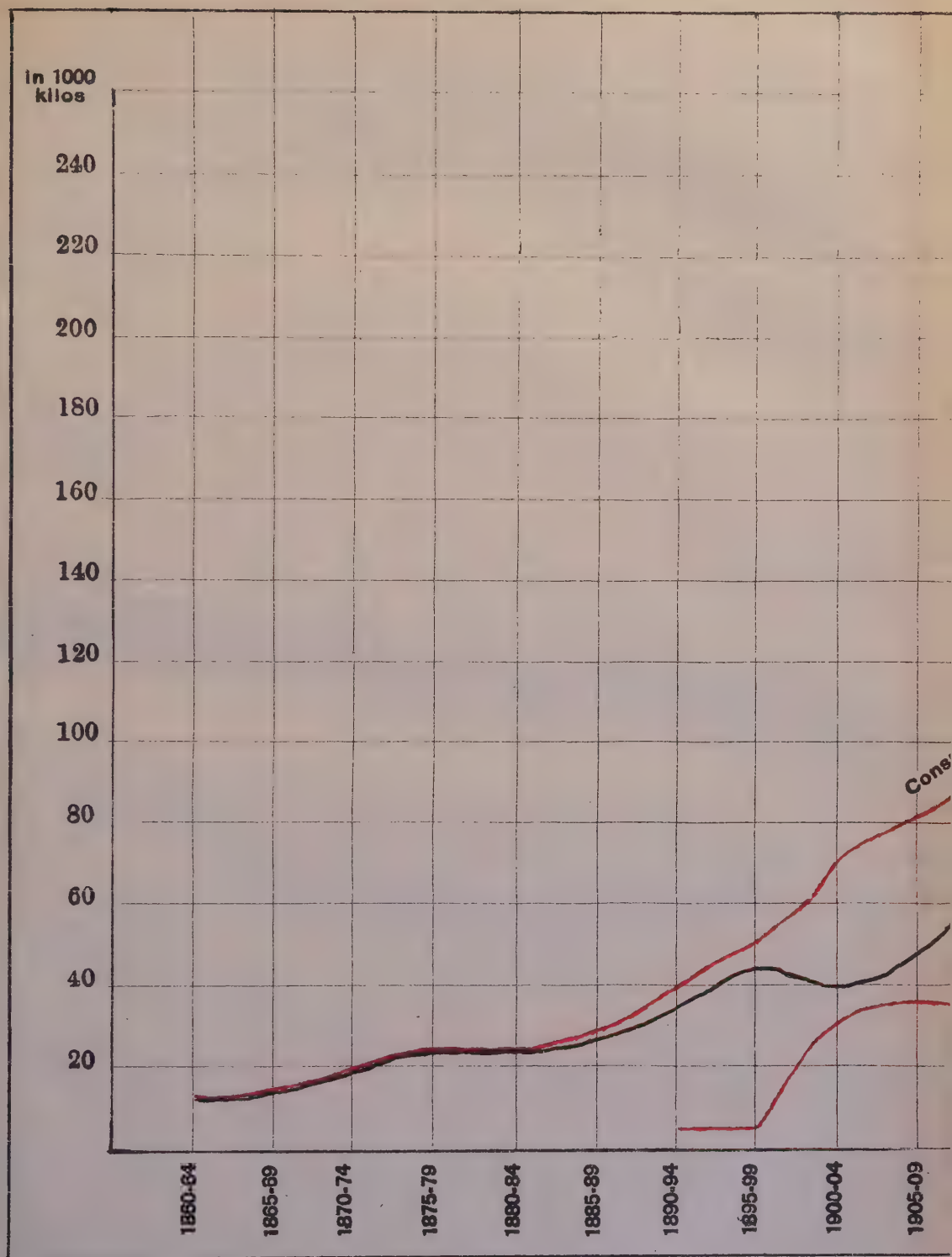
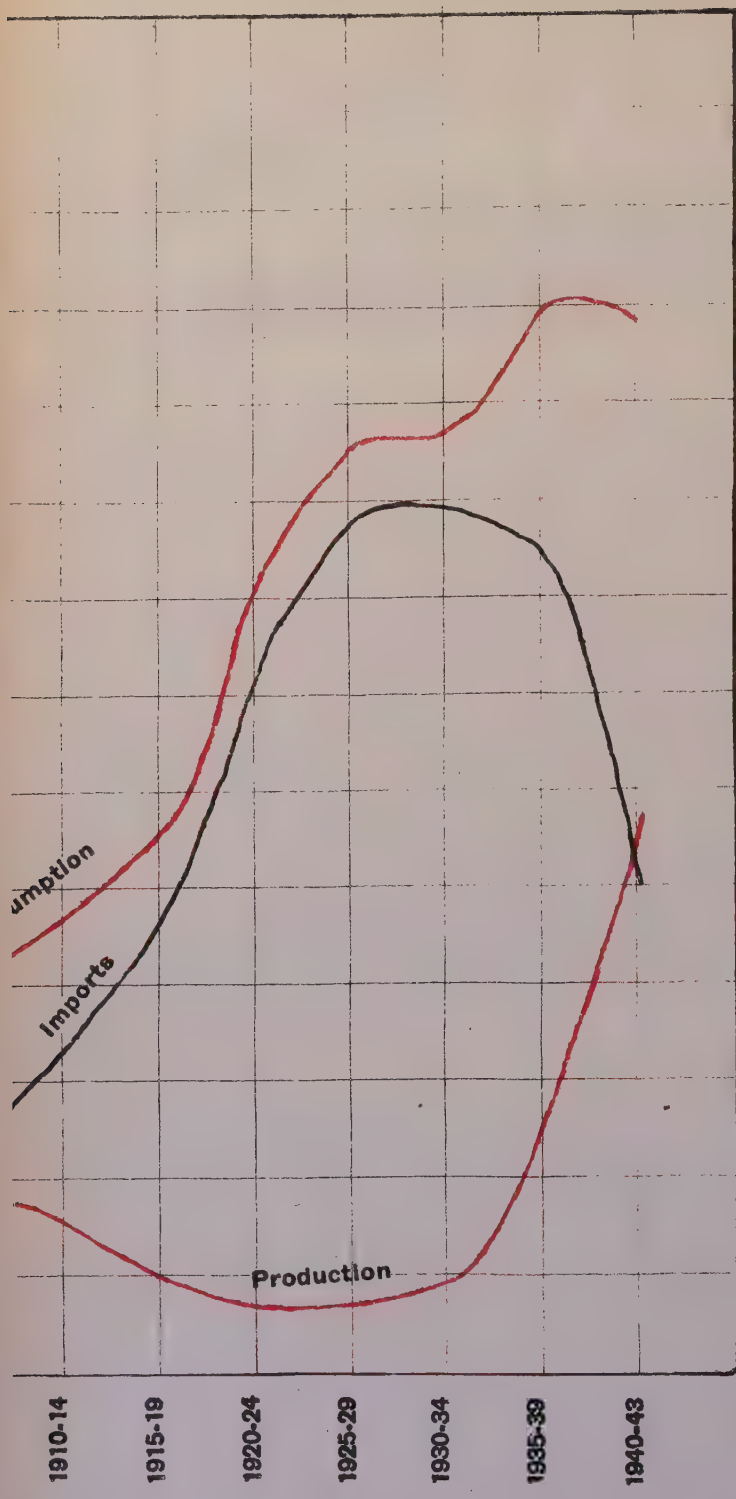
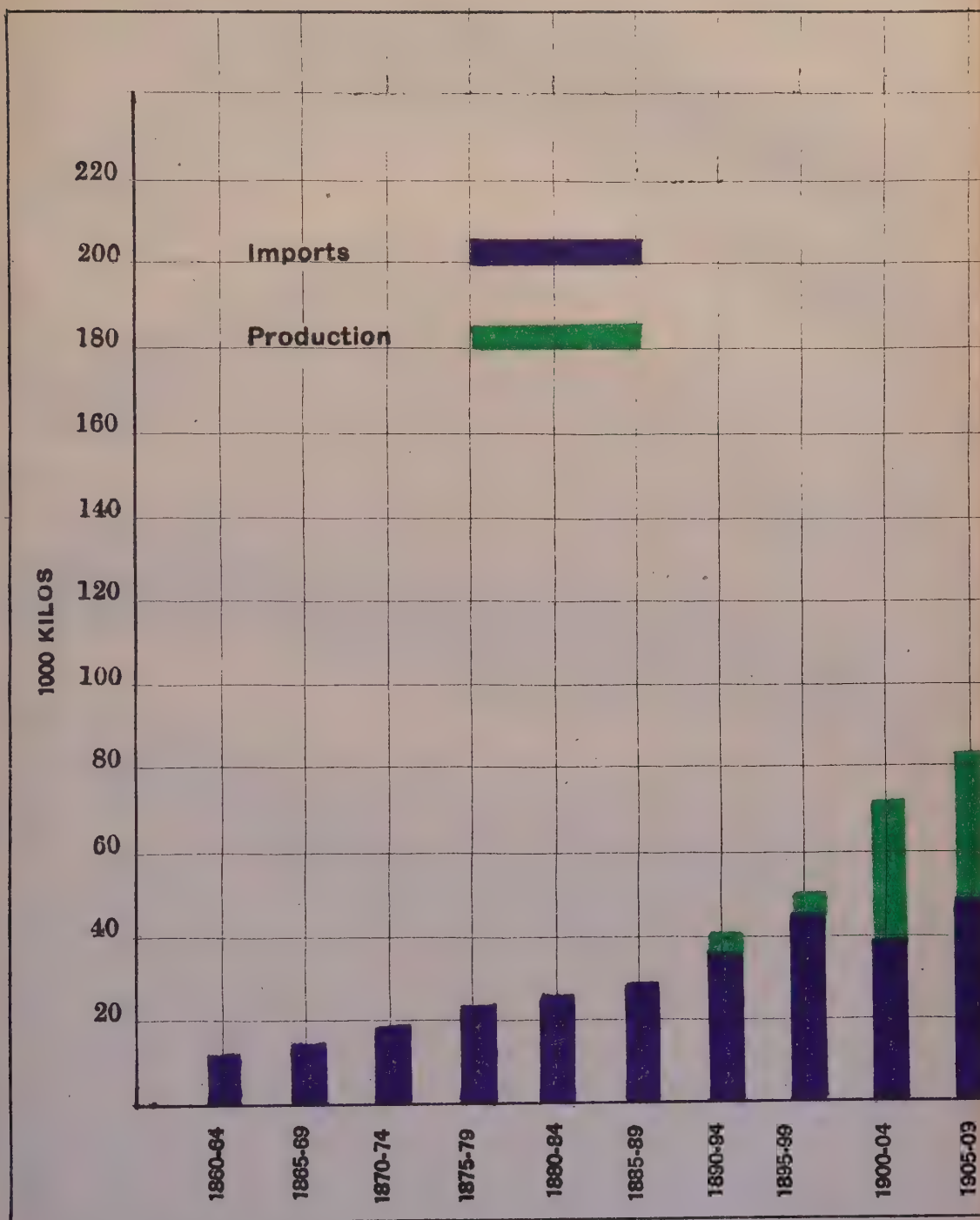


Fig 1. Consumption, Production and Imports of tea in M



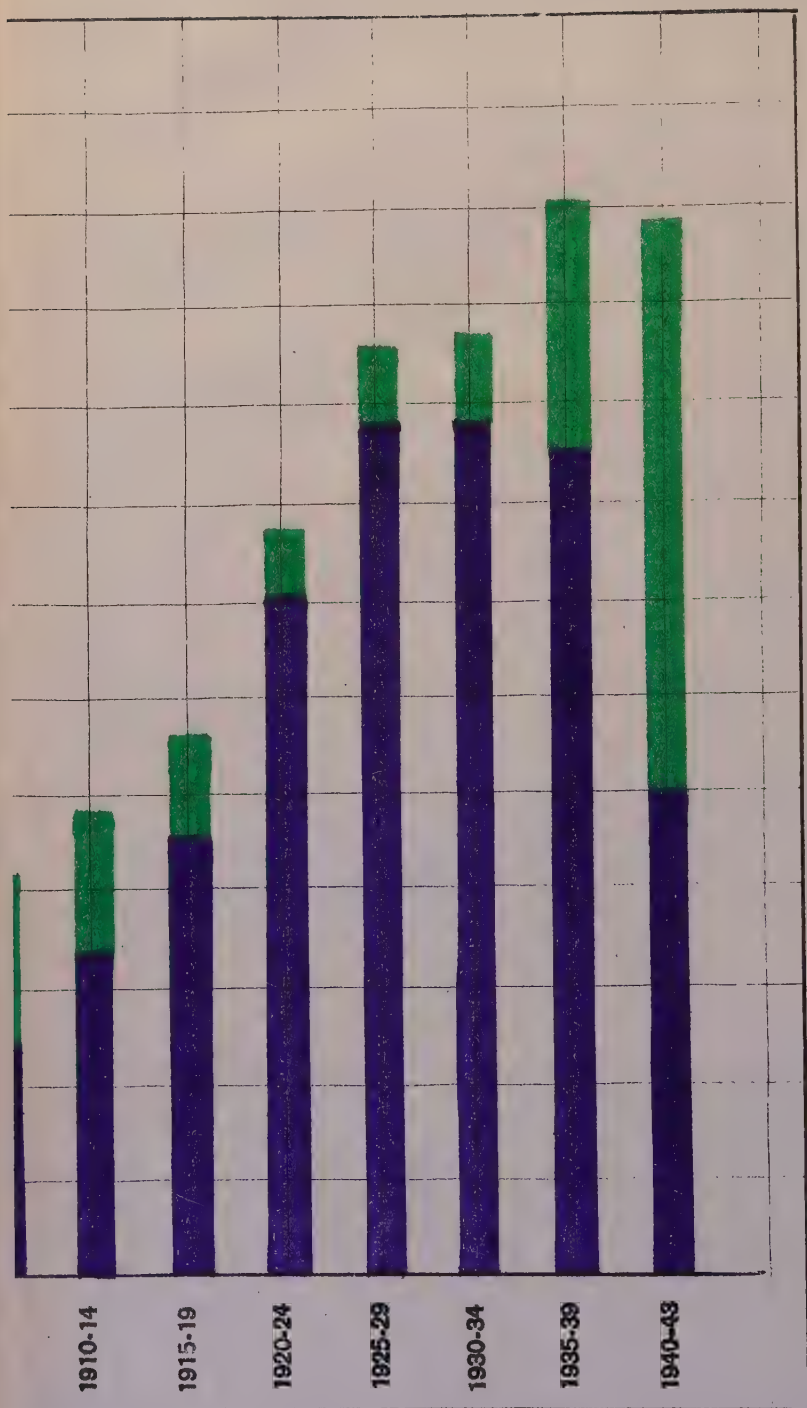


Laurelius from 1860 to 1943

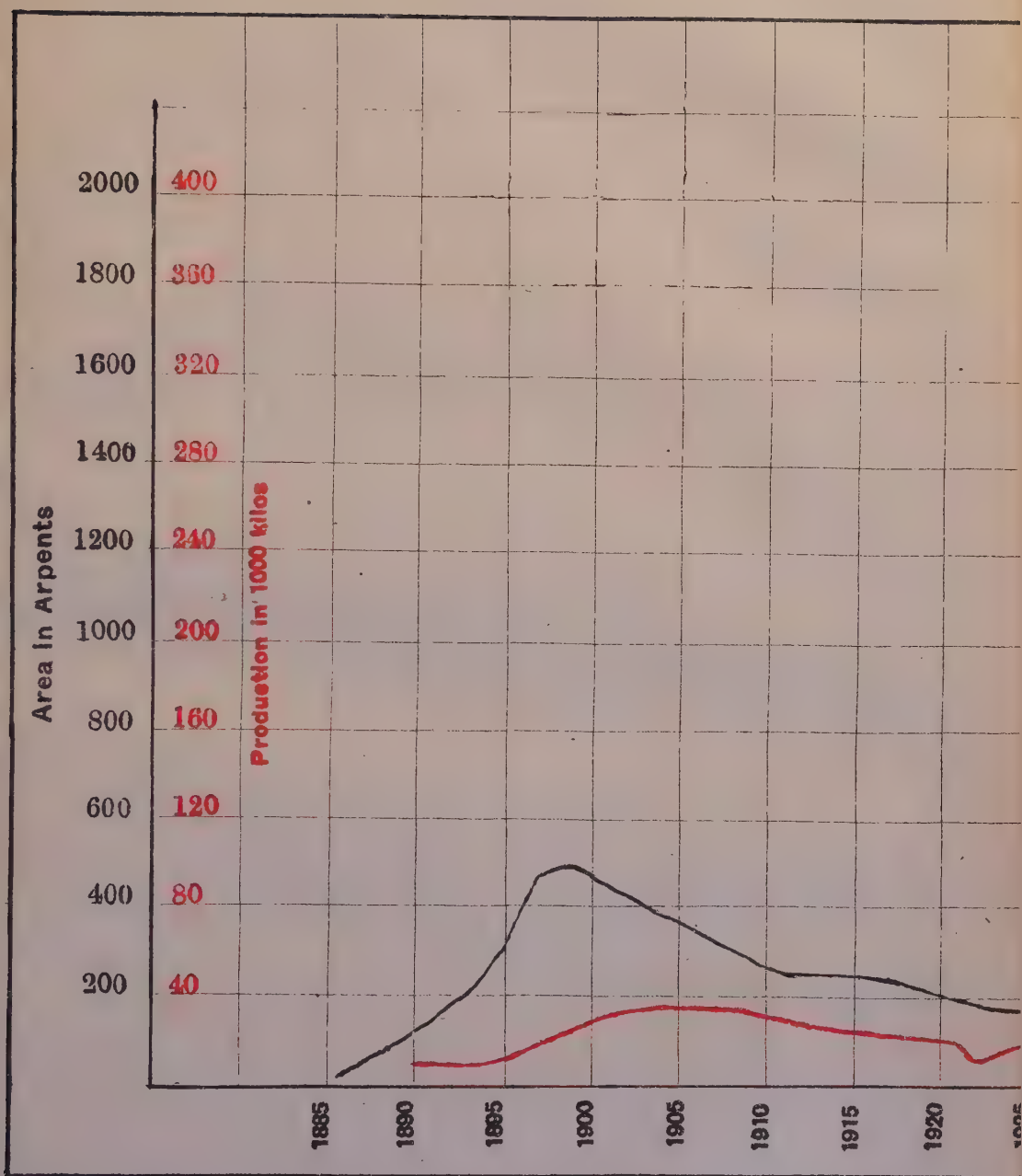


**Fig 2.** Consumption of tea in Mauritius



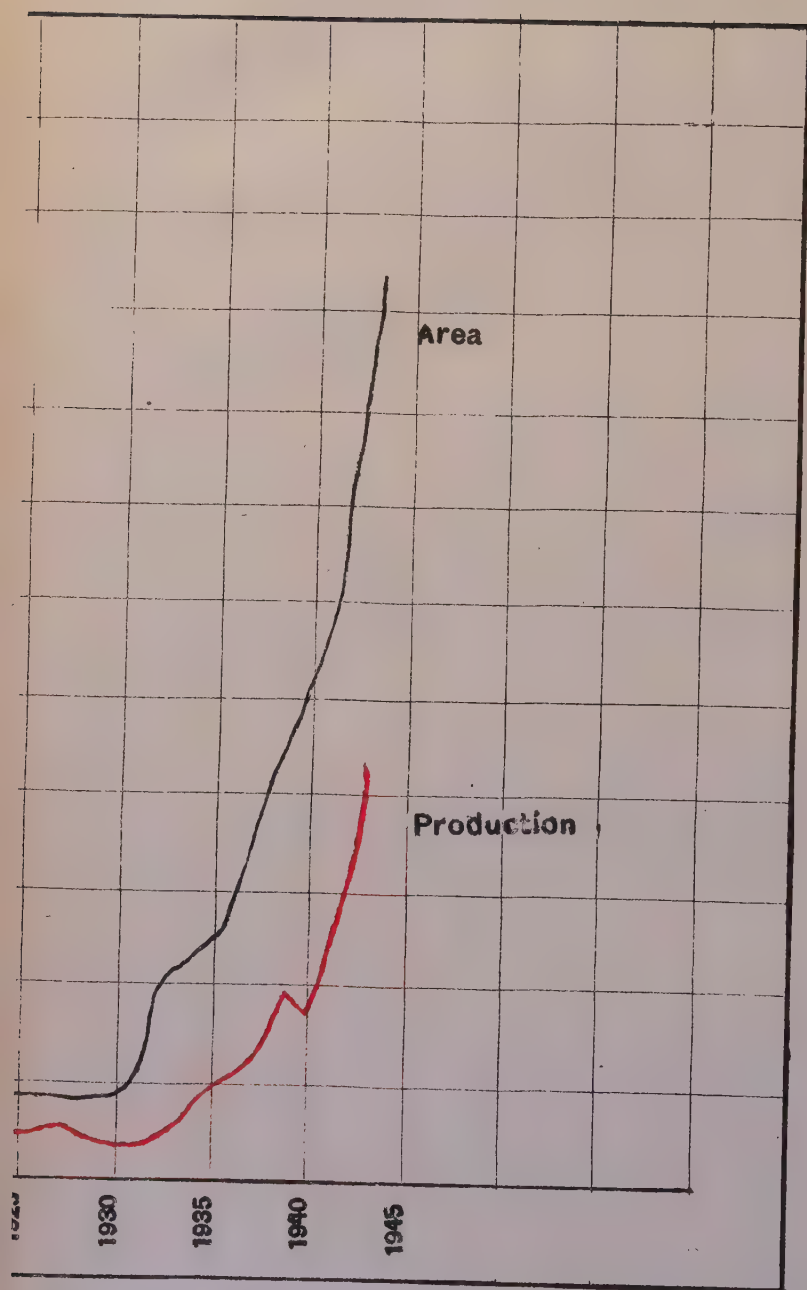


from 1860 to 1943

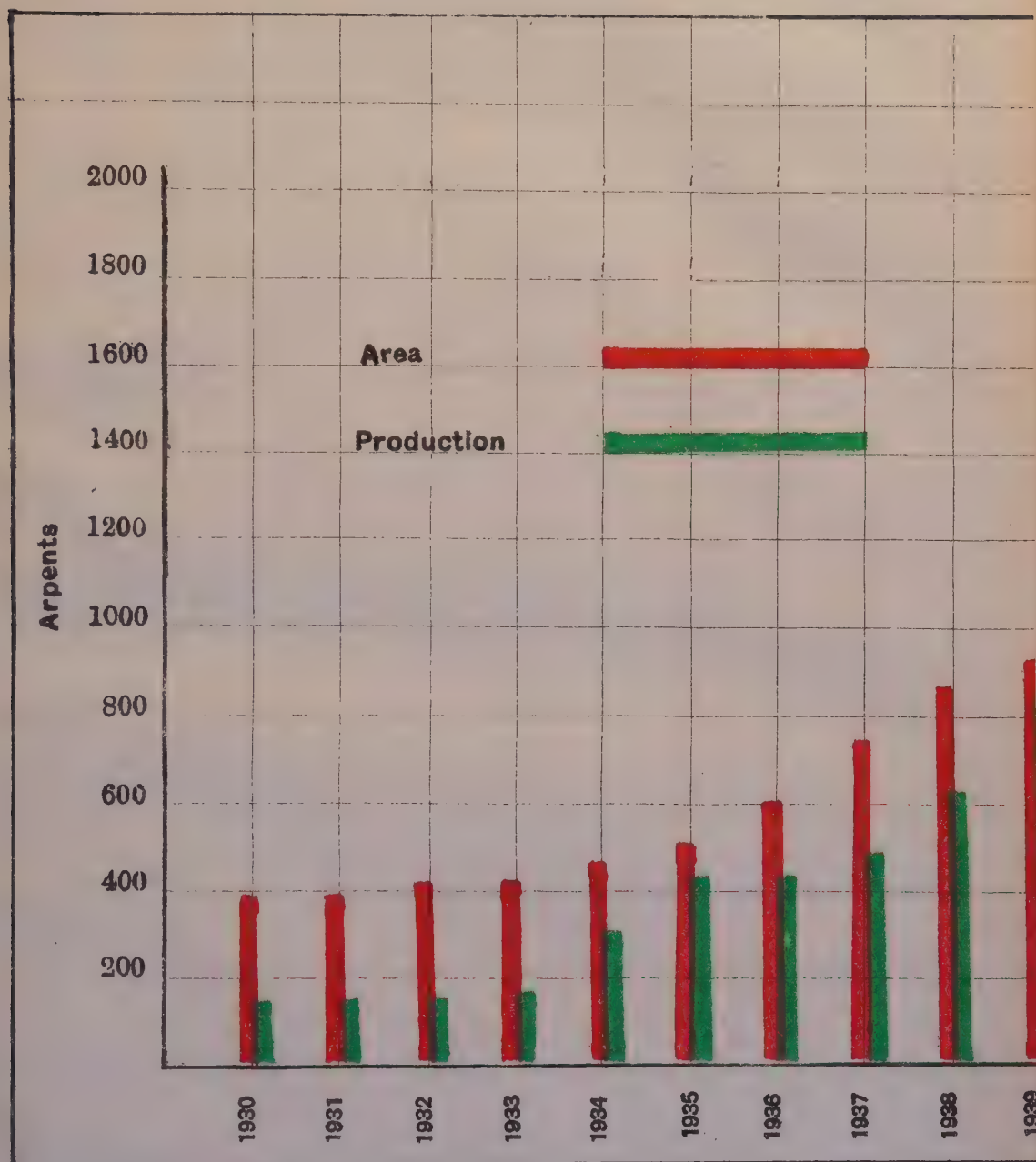


**Fig 3.** Area and Production of tea in Maurit



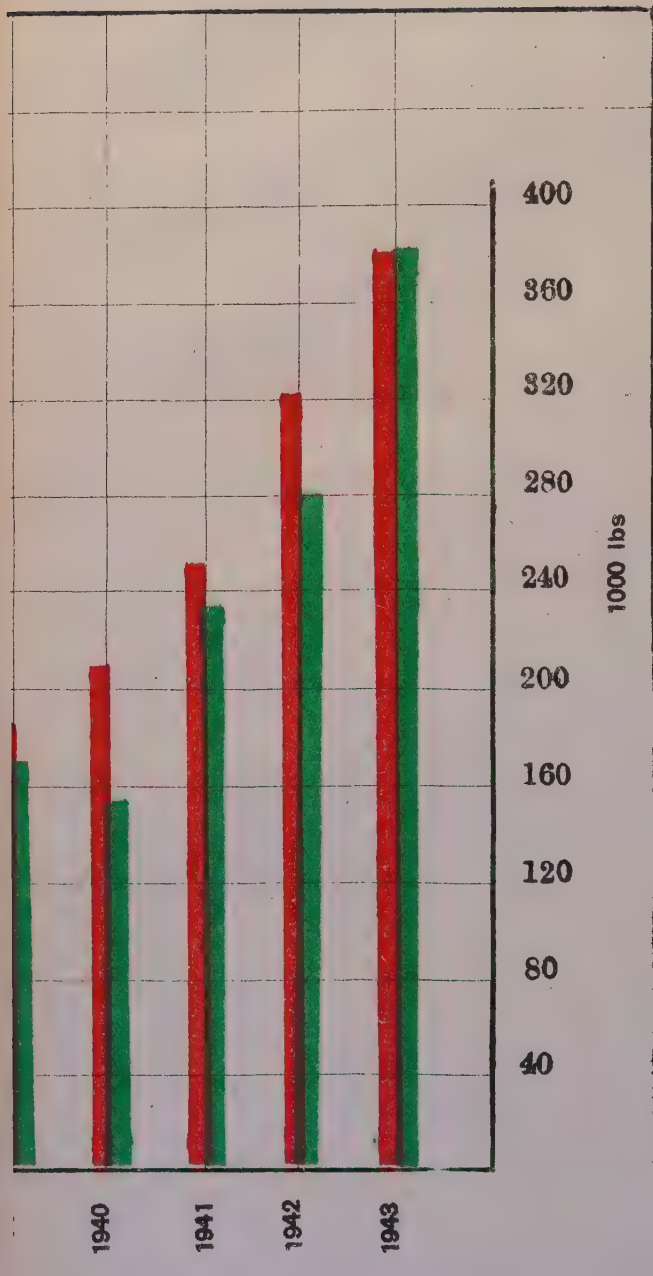


ius from 1886 to 1943



**Fig 4.** Area and Production of tea in Mauritius from 1930 to 1939





om 1930 to 1943

## APPENDIX III

## DISTRIBUTION OF PLANTATIONS BY LOCALITIES

AS THEY EXIST TO-DAY (1944)

Localities	No. of Planters	Approximate age of Tea				Total Arpents
		1 Year Arpents	2 Years Arpents	3 Years Arpents	4 Years and above Arpents	
Curepipe ...	13	12.25	8.50	3.08	126.96	150.79
Nouvelle France ...	26	23.50	65.74	46.88	236.46	372.58
Pont Colville ...	7	2.84	29.29	3.00	—	35.13
La Flora ...	11	8.00	61.68	45.00	230.50	345.18
Grand Bois-Mexico..	5	—	9.00	—	8.72	17.72
Bois Cheri ...	5	199.22	74.19	46.17	321.06	640.64
Other Localities* ...	6	39.50	213.50	14.50	59.00	326.50
Total ...	73	285.31	461.90	158.63	982.70	1888.54

\* Petite Savanne, Cluny, Tamarin Falls.

## RED ROT AND M 134/32

P. O. WIEHE

Plant Pathologist, Department of Agriculture.

In view of the important position which M 134/32 now occupies in the Sugar Industry of the island, the reaction of this cane variety to red rot is a question which has occupied the special attention of the Plant Pathology division of the Department of Agriculture. Thus, in the Annual Report for 1941<sup>1</sup> and in a previous article published in *La Revue Agricole*<sup>2</sup>, indications were given on the distribution of the disease, the effect of climatic factors on the disease, variations in susceptibility in relation to the age of the cane and the apparent correlation between time of planting and incidence of red rot. It was pointed out that available observations indicated that canes planted early, i.e. "grande saison", were more susceptible to the disease than those planted later, namely "petite" or "moyenne saison".

The incidence of red rot in 1944 has been definitely higher than in previous years, and the object of these notes is to indicate to planters the present position with regards to red rot and M 134/32.

Red rot has been observed in all localities of the island although the incidence varied greatly from district to district. A tentative classification of regions starting from those least affected to those showing a high incidence is as follows: (1) North and Black River; (2) Flacq; (3) Plaines Wilhems, Moka, Savanne; (4) Grand Port. Large variations were observed between estates of the same district and no correlation could be established between the intensity of the disease and climatic regions.

Three types of infection were distinguished:

(a) Initial infection at or near ground level, usually following mechanical injury. Rare.

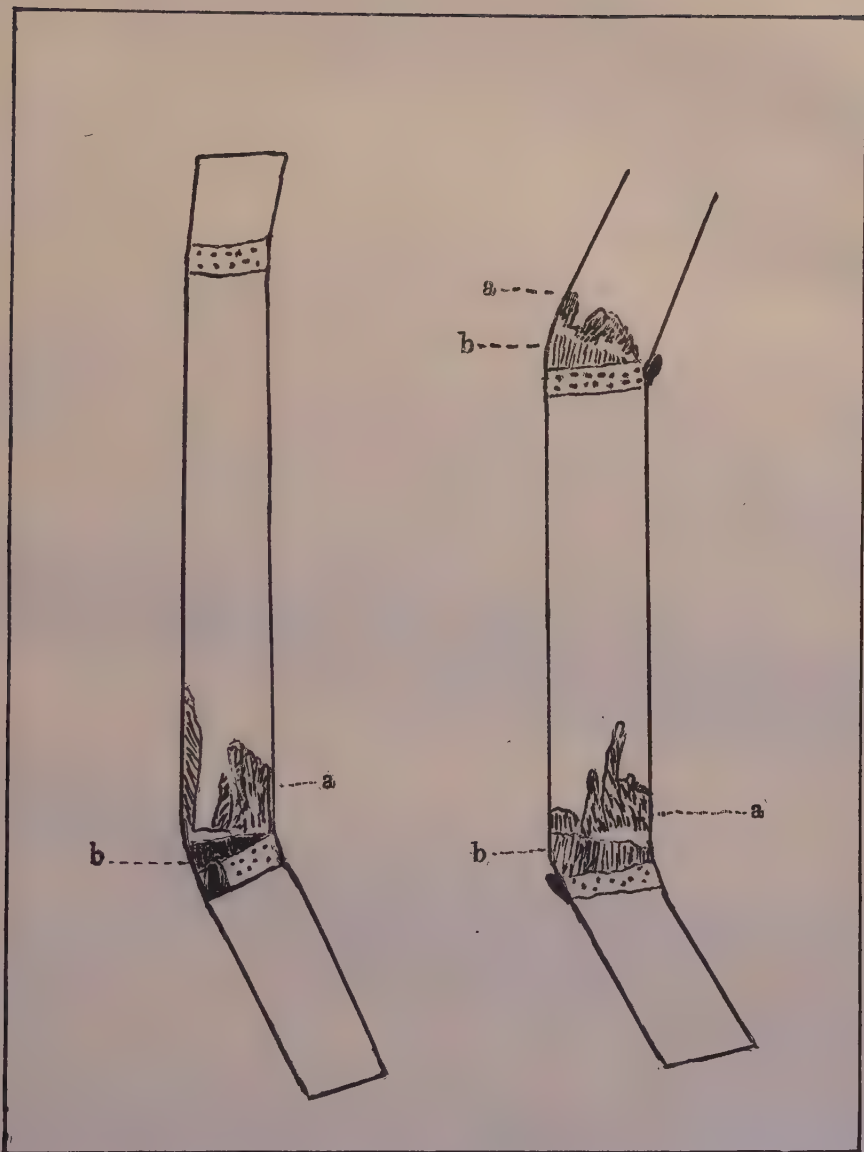
(b) Initial infection following borer injuries. Common in the North, but the lesions were often restricted to a small marginal area around the galleries.

(c) Initial infection at the growth ring, about one third or half way up

1. Annual Report of the Department of Agriculture 1941, p. 10.

Wiehe P.O. "La Morve rouge de la canne à sucre". *Rev. Agr. Maur.* 20, 198-202, 1941.





**Fig. 1.** Cane shoots attacked by Red rot. Primary infection at (a) starting from the region of the growth ring (b) the epidermis of which has dried up.



the stem. Such cases were observed on bent canes and infection coincided with the outer bend of the growth ring. It was frequently observed that in bent canes, whether diseased or healthy, the epidermis of the rind on the outer portion of the bend at the growth ring was dried up. It is reasonable to account for the death of this tissue as follows: the April cyclone caused the canes to lie down, thereafter they grew upwards thus causing a bend or so called "knee" which was more liable to friction with other canes, stones, soil etc... sometime after the cyclone. The ultimate result was damage to the tissues at the growth ring, thus providing a door of entry for the pathogen. It is significant that out of 67 canes taken at random on different estates, and carefully studied, 55 or 82% showed that initial infection occurred at the exterior of the bend and coincided with the dried up tissues of the growth ring (Fig 1.). This type of infection was observed in virgins as well as in ratoons canes.

It would appear that the higher incidence of red rot in 1944 can be ascribed to an after effect of the April cyclone, and it must be stressed that M 134/32 is definitely more resistant to red rot than a number of its predecessors such as DK/74 which went out of cultivation because of its susceptibility to this disease.

Further abundant evidence was obtained during the course of recent inspections on estates.

- (a) That M 134/32 should not be cultivated as a "grande saison" cane.
- (b) That the practice of leaving advanced "babas" is to be avoided as these shoots are much more liable to be attacked by red rot.



## LA PROPAGATION DU LETCHI

## A. NORTH-COOMBES

Le letchi vient très bien de graines ; mais il faut attendre quelquefois quinze et même dix-huit ans avant d'obtenir une récolte, et l'on n'est jamais certain d'avoir de bons fruits. Fort heureusement qu'on peut le propager facilement par le marcottage ou, comme on dit à Maurice par provin. Si le letchi n'est pas plus répandu à Maurice où cependant il vient mieux qu'ailleurs, la faute est souvent due à une opération imparfaite. Il est très facile d'assurer la réussite d'un pourcentage très élevé de provin à condition de prendre quelques précautions. Voici comment on doit opérer.

On choisit une branche âgée d'un an à peu près et ayant un diamètre d'environ deux centimètres. On enlève au moyen d'un canif bien tranchant et propre un anneau d'écorce large de 4 à 5 centimètres, et l'on gratte jusqu'au bois. On laisse exposé ainsi à l'air pendant 45 à 60 jours jusqu'à ce qu'il s'y forme un bourrelet. Certains propagateurs n'exposent pas ainsi car le bois peut trop se dessécher et causer la mort prématurée de la branche. On devrait quand même exposer quelques jours à l'air.

Ce bourrelet se formera plus vite en saison chaude. On évitera donc de commencer la préparation des provins, passé le mois de mai. D'ailleurs la floraison ne tardera pas et l'on doit éviter de faire les provins pendant toute la période de fructification. Le moment le plus propice est de février à mars ; sur le littoral on peut commencer en janvier. En tous cas ce sera après la récolte des fruits.

Après la formation du bourrelet on prépare un mélange à parties égales de fumier bien mûr et de sol fin que l'on attache autour du bourrelet au moyen d'un morceau de goni ou de toile d'aloès. On évitera tout autre couverture si l'on pense que l'eau d'arrosage ne pénétrera pas facilement telle les gaines de feuilles de lataniers.

Au bout de trois mois le provin sera prêt. Pendant ce temps le seul soin consiste en l'arrosage journalier. Cet arrosage ne doit pas se faire au moyen d'un arrosoir car il faut un temps appréciable afin de s'assurer que l'eau pénètre bien. Le plus simple est de fixer au-dessus du provin une moque de la contenance d'une chopine (moque de saumon d'une livre) au fond de laquelle on perce un petit trou par lequel on peut faire passer une ficelle qui amènera l'eau petit à petit au provin. On ne doit pas se servir d'un récipient de plus fort volume, car si le provin est toujours trop humide il devient la demeure de nombreux mille-pattes. De cette façon

on assure l'arrosage de nombreux provins dans un temps très court. Un seul arrosage suffira journellement.

Il arrive quelquefois qu'après cette période de trois mois environ le provin n'est pas prêt. Cela a lieu si le cambium n'a pas été soigneusement enlevé ou si l'arrosage a été défectueux.

Après ce laps de temps on fait le sevrage du provin de la plante mère. Avant de sevrer on s'assure que des racines ont poussé ; pour ce faire on ne doit pas enlever la couverture de goni ; il s'agit simplement d'observer si les jeunes racines ont percé la couverture.

Le sevrage mal fait est souvent la cause principale de non-réussite. Voici comment on doit s'y prendre. On coupe au moyen d'un hansard ou d'un couteau bien tranchant au-dessous du provin sur une profondeur égale à la moitié de l'épaisseur de la branche. La coupure se fait quelquefois à la face supérieure, le choix étant dicté par le souci d'empêcher que la branche ne se fende longitudinalement. Il faut parfois attacher la marcotte afin d'empêcher justement la branche de se fendre surtout si la plante mère n'est pas bien abritée ou que l'on craigne les fortes brises. Quinze jours plus tard on coupe jusqu'aux trois quarts de la grosseur de la branche et deux semaines après on détache le provin de la plante mère.

Aussitôt le provin détaché, on coupera toutes les feuilles par le milieu afin de réduire la transpiration. On mettra le provin dans une caisse ou, ce qui coûte moins cher, on l'entourera d'une grosse motte de terre retenue par de l'herbe serrée à la base ("grass pot"). On le gardera à l'ombre pendant environ un mois ; il perdra toutes ses feuilles et poussera des jets nouveaux. Lorsque ces derniers seront devenus d'un vert foncé on sera certain que le système racinaire répondra aux besoins de la jeune plante et on peut mettre en terre. Il n'y aura pas lieu d'ombrager le jeune plant à moins qu'il ne fasse très sec.

Il est à souhaiter que ces notes soient de quelque utilité, le letchi étant un de nos meilleurs arbres fruitiers dont la résistance aux cyclones est assez bonne. On devrait propager le letchi vu la possibilité de reprendre après la guerre l'exportation des fruits en chambre frigorifique vers les grands marchés européens et vu le fait que peu de pays au monde produisent des letchis de la saveur des nôtres.

## CHAMBRE D'AGRICULTURE

Rapport du Président sur l'Exercice 1943-44 (Fin)\*

## SHORT MEMORANDUM ON THE SUGAR INDUSTRY

There are 36 sugar factories in Mauritius (one factory has been closed since the beginning of the war).

The sugar factories crush their own canes and the canes belonging to planters.

Before 1939, the various factories could purchase planters' canes freely, and competition between factories to secure canes was such that canes had very often to be carried great distances to a far away factory, though there may have been a factory at the very door of the estate on which such canes were grown.

In 1939, the Cane Planters and Sugar Millers Control Ordinance was passed in terms of which each factory had assigned to it a special area, and all planters' canes grown in such area, could only be crushed at such factory. Each factory, moreover, could only crush canes grown in its own area.

A Central Board was created under the chairmanship of the Director of Agriculture vested with power and authority :

- (a) of determining the factory areas ;
- (b) of fixing the price to be paid by the factory for the planters' canes.

The normal price fixed in the Colony for planters' canes represents a certain quantum of sugar for each ton of cane supplied by the planter, on the principle embodied in the law that the average amount of sugar which planters may expect to receive would not be less than two thirds of the amount of sugar which a ton of canes delivered at the factory might normally be expected to yield.

In fixing the amount of sugar to be received by the planter the Central Board takes into consideration the following factors :

- (1) whether or not the canes are carried to the factory by the factory or by the planter himself ;
- (2) cost of such transport if made by the factory ;
- (3) amount of scums and factory residue that may be given to the planter ;
- (4) cost of transport of the sugar from the factory to the docks at Port-Louis.

\* Voir Revue Agricole, Vol. XXIII, No. 5, p. 197.



All the sugars received by the planters for their canes are delivered to the planter by the factory in Port Louis.

### FINANCING THE CROP.

Every sugar concern in the Colony, whether owner of a factory or not, has to finance the production of its crop.

The financial year of each concern generally begins at any time between the 1st of January and the 1st of July and lasts one calendar year.

The expenses for each financial year, known locally as "Faisance Valoir" expenses, are the following :

#### 10. Agricultural.

Preparing planting and cultivating the fields, cutting, loading and transport of canes to the factory.

Fertilisers.

In certain districts Irrigation.

Maintenance and running expenses of tramway lines and materials.

Transport vehicles, lorries, carts, etc.

Draught animals.

#### 20. Industrial.

Maintenance and Running Expenses of Factories.

In certain factories Sulphur for the manufacture of white sugars.

Bags for packing the sugars.

Transport of sugars from the factory to Port Louis.

#### 30. General Expenses.

Maintenance of Buildings, Houses, Camps, etc.

Insurances.

Staff.

Medical Care.

Port Louis office.

10. It should be noted : That each estate as a rule cultivates  $\frac{1}{6}$  or  $\frac{1}{7}$  of its cane area in virgin canes, the difference in ratoons.

Virgin canes are planted in one financial year and cut for the first time in the next financial year. This does not affect the "faisance valoir" as the rotation of virgins is the same every year — the canes are uprooted and replanted after 5, 6 or 7 years.

20. The expenditure on Labour represents on an average 45 o/o of the total amount of the "faisance valoir". An increase of 10 o/o on the wages for one year results in an approximate increase of 5 o/o on the cost of production.

The yearly faisance valoir for a sugar concern varies between Rs. 600,000 and Rs. 1,000,000 or more according to the output of the factory.

This amount is, in most cases, borrowed on current account by each concern from its broker or from the banks.

Some few companies, which may have some reserves in cash, may use such reserves for their "faisance valoir" and borrow only part of their yearly "faisance valoir".

The brokers or the banks charge interest on the sums so advanced by them, and in some cases a commission is also charged.

The amount of interest and commission so paid form part of the "faisance valoir" of the estate.

The rate of interest at present ruling for "faisance valoir" varies between 5 and 6 o/o, and the commission when charged is now usually of 1 o/o.

The gross profit made by the estate every year is the difference between what it receives for its sugar in Rupees and the amount of its "faisance valoir" calculated as above.

Interest on mortgage and other debts, such as debit balances on "faisance valoir" for preceding crops, do not form part of the "faisance valoir".

It should also be noted that, when calculating profits in the Colony, no provision is made for future renewals and for depreciation of plant, machinery, tramways, buildings, etc.

This has been due to the difficult times the Sugar Industry has gone through during the last fifteen years.

### SALE OF SUGARS.

Before 1920, the sugars of each factory and of the planters were consigned to a broker to be sold — the sugars were consigned to the broker having made the advances for faisance valoir, and the proceeds of the sugar after deduction :

10. of the brokerage rate on the sale,

20. of the amount due for advances and interest, were paid over to the owner of the sugars by the broker.

The rate of brokerage as fixed by law is 1 o/o, payable half by the seller and half by the purchaser. (Government Notice, 5th January, 1887).

In 1920, The Mauritius Sugar Syndicate was formed for the purpose of pooling the sales of all the sugars belonging to members of the Syndicate.

At first, quite a number of sugar concerns in the Colony did not form part of the Syndicate and sold their sugars separately, but during the last ten years or so, all Sugar Estates and all Sugar Planters have formed part of the Syndicate.

The first Sugar Syndicate in 1920 was formed for one year. The Syndicate has been formed since, for periods of 3 or 5 years, the last renewal in 1942 having been made for a period of 5 years.

All the sugars reaching the Docks in Port Louis are registered in the name of the Syndicate.

The sugars are sold by the Syndicate for account of the planters and, after deduction of various charges and of the Syndicate expenses, the proceeds are distributed to the planters in proportion to the quantity of sugar sent by each of them.

As the proceeds of the sale are received by the Syndicate, pro rata payments are made amongst members and when the price of all the sugars of each crop has been cashed, a final payment is made.

The Syndicate also grants advances to planters in case of need before or between such payments, and charges interest on such advances at the rate of 5 o/o.

Before the war, the sugars were sold by the Syndicate at competitive prices to various sugar merchants in Mauritius buying for account of their London Agents, but since the war all our sugars are sold to the Ministry of Food in London.

The Syndicate is managed and administered by a body of persons appointed by the Sugar Estate Factories and the Sugar Planters. Such representatives are in most cases the brokers of the various sugar concerns.

On the recommendation of the Commission of Enquiry of 1937 on the strikes in Mauritius, two representatives of the small Indian Planters now form part of this body.

An audited account of the transactions of the Syndicate for each crop is published annually.

The planters have to send their sugars to the Syndicate through their brokers who receive a brokerage of  $3/4$  o/o on the proceeds of their crops ( $1/2$  o/o on sale of sugar,  $1/4$  o/o on negotiations of the draft).

It has been stated that this brokerage charge constitutes an unwarranted levy on the planter.

It should be noted however :

That the Syndicate has been formed and constituted through the agency of the Sugar Brokers most of whom are interested in nearly all the sugar concerns of the Colony and represent such concerns on the Board of the Syndicate. The Syndicate has been constituted only on condition that such brokerage should be paid, and without the fulfilment of this condition, the Syndicate, as it exists to-day comprising the whole of the



Sugar Industry, would never have been formed and could never be reconstituted at its expiry every five years.

Most of the planters consider that the benefit and advantages derived by the Planting Community in being united in a single body, whereby the sales of all the sugars of the Colony are pooled, even after deduction of the comparatively small amount paid as brokerage, would never be obtained by individual planters or by a small syndicate who could save the brokerage commission of  $3/4$  o/o.

In case the Syndicate should be dissolved, most of the planters would still have to employ a broker for the sale of their sugar.

In connection with brokerage charges, it is to be noted that the London Brokers are also receiving brokerage at the other end. Before the war, this brokerage amounted to  $\frac{1}{2}$  o/o, but as the London brokers have lost the terminal market, the figure has been increased to 1% as from 1940.

Local sugar shippers receive a commission of 1% on the gross purchasing price of the sugar actually shipped (excluding the value of quota certificates).

Before the war, the Shippers who were acting independently and on their own account were receiving this commission in the usual course of their trade.

## THE ECONOMIC POSITION OF THE SUGAR INDUSTRY

The Sugar Industry of the Colony is heavily indebted.

This large indebtedness is mainly due to the rapid fall in the price of sugar on the World Market after the boom years of the last war.

It is generally considered that after 1920 the Industry could not adjust its cost of production to this fall in prices: neither the cost of labour — which, as we have seen, represents 45% of the cost of production — nor the cost of raw materials could be proportionately brought down.

The Industry began consequently to carry forward debit balances from year to year.

It soon became necessary to resort to loans from the Government.

The indebtedness was greatly increased as the result of losses due to a cyclone in 1931 and a drought in 1934.

During all this period, from 1923 onwards, the price of sugar was steadily going down or remaining at its lowest figures. This has made it impossible for the Sugar Industry to reimburse to a more appreciable extent the various loans which were incurred to save it, and the Colony with it, from complete financial collapse.

Thus the Industry entered the war period burdened with considerable commitments.

Net Average Prices realised per 100 Kilos of Sugar  
during period under Review.

1923	Rs. 38.30	1931	Rs. 12.08
1924	26.02	1932	12.38
1925	18.68	1933	12.12
1926	21.60	1934	12.10
1927	19.22	1935	11.38
1928	17.39	1936	10.99
1929	15.05	1937	12.20
1930	12.08	1938	12.03

War Period.

1939	Rs. 13.86
1940	15.45
1941	15.39
1942	16.63
1943	17.50 (Estimated)

LOANS.

From 1925 onwards, the Sugar Industry of the Colony found itself in the necessity of making constant applications to the Government for some form of assistance.

1o. In 1925, the Sugar Export Duty of Rs. 10. per Ton, levied in terms of Ord : 11 of 1920, was reduced to Rs. 5. per Ton, with the consent of the Secretary of State.

2o. In 1926, His Excellency the Governor stated (Minutes 27th July 1926) that the Government proposed, in order to help the Sugar Industry then passing through a difficult phase, to raise locally a Loan of Rs. 5,000,000 at 6o/o interest payable in 7 or 10 years. This Loan was raised by Ord : 15 of 1926 repayable in 8 years.

3o. In a Minute of the 30th November 1928, His Excellency the Governor stated that he was much concerned with the serious position which had arisen through the reduction of prices of the Sugar Market.

The duty leviable under Ord : 15 of 1926 in reimbursement of the 1926 Loan was accordingly remitted for the financial year, and Ord : 29 of 1928 abolished the Special Export Duty on Sugar of Rs. 5 per Ton then still existing.

4o. In 1929, the Government had again to come to the assistance of the Sugar Industry.

In a Minute of the 30th April 1929, His Excellency the Governor stated that the staple industry of the Colony was considerably embarrassed by the heavy fall in the prices of sugar since 1928 ; that notwithstanding the emergency measures taken in remitting the Special Export Duty on Sugar and in suspending payment of interest and sinking-fund on the 1926 Loan, still further relief was necessary and that a Loan

of Rs. 6,000,000 repayable by an Export Duty on Sugar would be made to the Industry.

This Loan was raised in terms of :

(a) Ord : 13 of 1929, authorising the Governor to raise £ 200,000 in London ;

(b) Ord : 14 of 1929, empowering the Government to raise a Loan of Rs. 3,300,000 locally.

Both Loans bore interest at the rate of 50/0 per annum.

The 1926 Loan of Rs. 5,000,000 and these two Loans of Rs. 6,000,000 were consolidated in terms of Ord : 15 of 1929, and were made repayable by a Special Export Duty on Sugar to be levied every year at a rate to be fixed by Proclamation, and proportional to the estimated gross value of the crop every year.

[Rs. 5.74 per Ton for 1942/43 Crop — P. 5 of 1943].

50. As a result of such repeated requests for assistance from the Colony, Sir Francis Watts was appointed in 1929 by the Secretary of State to proceed to Mauritius to inquire into and report on the Mauritius Sugar Industry.

Sir F. Watts arrived in Mauritius in October 1929 and his Report was published in March 1930.

Sir Francis Watts came to the conclusion that the Sugar Industry of the Colony generally speaking was carried out at a loss in the then existing circumstances, with the price of sugar round about £ 13 per Ton f.o.b.

Sir Francis Watts recommended that the Imperial Government should be invited to make grants in aid to the Colony, calculated to make good such losses.

10. It should be noted here : That Lord Oliver and Mr. Semple, who were appointed to proceed to the West Indies to report on the Sugar Industry in the West Indies and British Guiana, in their Report — which was published at the same time — also considered that the West Indian Sugar Industry was carried out at a loss, and recommended amongst other things that the Imperial Government should purchase the West Indies sugars at a fixed minimum rate based on cost of production.
20. That the Financial Commissioners who visited Mauritius in 1931 stated in their Report (p. 225) that, though they did not question the finding of Sir Francis Watts, they considered that his statement that “ the Sugar Industry of the Colony generally speaking was carried out at a loss ” should be read with the reservation that certain estates did make some profit.



The Financial Commissioners, nevertheless, had to admit (p. 234) "that prices were still too low to provide a margin of profit except in the case of estates working under most favourable conditions both of physical suitability and financial management".

The Financial Commissioners, however, were looking forward confidently to a recovery of the world prices under the Chadbourne Scheme of the 9th May 1931 (p. 233).

The Chadbourne Scheme was unfortunately terminated in 1935 without having achieved any of its objects, and from 1931 onwards the price of sugar continued to fall reaching its lowest level in 1930.

In October 1930, further assistance had to be given to the Industry and, in terms of Ord : 24 of 1930, a Loan of Rs. 3,000,000 was made to the Planters out of the unexpended Balances of the Mauritius Improvement and Development Fund, payable in 30 years without interest.

(This Fund has been constituted in 1920 by the levying of a Special Export Duty on Sugar of Rs. 40.— per Ton Ord : 36 of 1920 — and had amounted originally to Rs. 13,377,986.82).

60. In 1931, Mauritius was visited by a cyclone which devastated the sugar crop, and in July 1931 further assistance had to be given to the Sugar Industry to meet the capital expenditure it had to incur and to meet the wants and necessities created as the result of the cyclone.

This Loan amounted to £ 500,000, was secured by the 1st rank mortgage and was repayable by annuity. (The crop of 1931 was reduced from an average of 230,000 Tons to 164,000 Tons).

70. In 1932, a delegation was sent to London by the Colony, when the difficult position of the Sugar Industry of the Colony was again forcibly put before the Secretary of State.

In 1934, a severe drought caused considerable losses to the Planting Community (the crop of 1934 was reduced from the average of 250,000 Tons which had then been reached to 178,000 Tons).

The Chamber of Agriculture sent a Memorandum to the Secretary of State, reviewing the whole position and unging the danger which the Colony was running if steps were not taken to remedy the precariousness of such position by a substantial rise in the prices of our sugar by increased preference or otherwise.

In January 1935, The Secretary of State approved that the Colonial Government should give support to the Industry by financing the coming crop. Loan of £ 450,000 — Ord : 2 of 1935.

This Loan was paid back the same year.

80. In April 1936, the Mauritius Agricultural Bank was constituted and, in the same year, had advanced long term Loans to Planters, amounting to Rs. 10,000,000 in round figures.

## Indebtedness of the Sugar Industry to the 30th June 1943.

	Original Amount	Amount outstanding on 30.6.43
Sugar Industry Loan (1926) Rs.	5,000.000	Rs. 2,517.419.46
Sugar Industry Loan (1929) No. 1 £ 204,603-11-7...	2,728.000	
Sugar Industry Loan (1929) No. 2 ...	3,400.000	
		Sinking Fund to 30.6.43 2,555.379.05
		Rs. 1,144,620.95
Loan from Improvement & Development Fund (1930)	3,036.000	3,036.481.57
Hurricane Loan (1931) to Sugar Industry alone — approximately £ 500.000	6,000.000	3,719,856.98
	Rs. 20,164.000	Rs. 11,529,137.06
Mauritius Agricultural Bank	10,000.000	10,000.000
Other Mortgages ...	20,000.000	20,000.000
	Rs. 50,164.000	Rs. 41,529,137.06

The Sugar Industry had therefore already paid back on 30.6.43 more than Rs. 8.600.000 on the Loans granted to it by the Government representing nearly 43% of its original debt, and this notwithstanding the difficult times it has been going through.

(In the year 1943/1944 the 1930 loan has been reduced by Rs.1.000.000; and all the other loans bearing interest have also been considerably reduced).

As far as the debt due to the Agricultural Bank is concerned all annuities have been paid as they became due and there is no amount outstanding on terms to date.

[The original memorandum gave the above figures to 30th June 1942].

## Prospects of the Industry

The above review of the Sugar Industry explains the circumstances which have brought about this heavy indebtedness.

The price of sugar has steadily gone down from 1923 when it stood

at Rs. 38.30 per 100 Kilos or Rs. 383. per Ton, to 1936 when it had fallen to Rs. 10.99 per 100 Kilos or Rs. 110. per Ton: the lowest price which the Mauritius Sugars have ever reached.

This is hardly surprising if it is remembered that the price of sugar on the world's markets before the war was not governed by the cost of production of this staple food — but was an arbitrary price largely dependent on subsidies and preferences which the Governments of Sugar Producing Countries paid to their producers.

The amount of such subsidies and preferences was so high that sugar could be sold on the London market at such low prices that the Sugar Industries of the British Colonies would have immediately collapsed if they in turn had not been given some measure of protection by the Home Government.

The measure of this protection was very small compared to that afforded to other producers throughout the world, as the following table will show :

COUNTRY.	STATE ASSISTANCE IN SHILLINGS PER CWT.
Poland	20.52
Spain	20.00
France	16.42
Italy	16.00
Germany	15.91
Czecho Slovakia	14.40
Hungary	14.00
Great Britain (Beet)	12.00
Belgium	11.54
Holland	10.81
Denmark	10.78
United States	10.50
Great Britain to Colonies	4.83

(Lord Weir's Report — U.K. Sugar Industry Committee — 14.6.34).

The result was that Mauritius which, according to the expert testimony of Sir Francis Watts, had its cost of production below that of all foreign countries, except Java and possibly Cuba, was compelled nevertheless to live on the preference granted to its sugars by the Home Government.

The natural consequence has been that the amount of this preference has formed during the past years the subject of all the complaints and of all the representations made to the Secretary of State by the Planting Community.

In 1937 and 1938, there has been a slight rise of about Rs. 1.00 per 100 kilos or Rs. 10.— per Ton in the price of our sugars.



This rise followed closely on the strikes of 1937 when the Industry had to raise the wages of its labourers, thus adding substantially to its cost of production.

It can thus be stated that when the war began, the Sugar Industry was not in a more favourable position than it had been during the previous ten years.

The Planters have succeeded, however, by their energy, by the compression of cost of production and by the cultivation of better varieties of canes with higher sucrose content, in maintaining the industry without having recourse to further Loans.

Since the war began, the price paid by the Ministry of Food for our sugars has been on the following scale :

<i>Pre War Period</i>		<i>War Period</i>	
1938	Rs. 12.03 per 100 Kilos	1939	Rs. 13.86 per 100 Kilos
		1940	15.46 —
		1941	15.49 —
		1942	16.63 —
		1943	17.50 (Estimated)

Against this rise, there has been a corresponding increase on all the items of expenditure constituting the cost of production :

	PRE WAR 1939 Index Figure	1940	1941	1942	1943
1) Fertilizers ...	100	150	175	190	230
2) Coal ...	100	127	130	135	160
3) Bags ...	100	145	125	155	170
4) Hardware ...	100	150	180	200	250
5) Lubricants ...	100	115	115	130	160
6) Transport of Sugars—Factory to Docks.		Distance Scale Price per Ton : Lowest : Rs. 2.25 Highest : Rs. 5.65	Same as 1940	Sliding Scale Price per Ton : Lowest : Rs. 2.94 Highest : Rs. 8.92	Same as 1942
7) Transport of Goods — Port Lous to Factory	Distance Scale Price per Ton : Lowest : Rs 1.50 Highest ; Rs. 3.00	Price per Ton : Lowest : Rs. 1.65 Highest : Rs. 3.30	Same as 1940	Price per Ton . Lowest : Rs. 1.80 Highest : Rs. 3.78	Same as 1942

## LABOUR.

It is impossible in this short Memorandum to give any exact figures regarding Labour. The question is very complex as conditions of Labour and methods of determining wages vary from district to district and in many instances from estate to estate in the same district.

It may be stated, however, and the Department of Labour could bear out this statement, that the cost of Labour has steadily increased from year to year from 1939 to 1942.

Between 1942 and 1943 alone, the cost of labour is estimated to have increased between 15 and 20 o/o so far.

Monthly labourers have had their wages increased from Rs. 18 per month before the war to Rs. 33 as from the 1st of October 1943, an increase of 83 o/o. The wages of daily labourers have increased probably to a greater extent.

Over and above this higher cost of production, the Industry has had to bear largely increased Taxation :

TAXES ON COMPANIES	1939	1940	1941	1942	1943
Poll Tax ... ..	Increased	Increased	1940 rates	20 % plus 5 % above Rs. 50,000 Surtax	25 % plus 10 % above Rs. 50,000 Surtax
Excess Profits Tax ...	Nil	Nil	20 %	40 %	50 %
Export Duty on Sugar (General Revenue) ...	Nil	Nil	Nil	5.90 per Ton	Nil

It is clear, therefore, from these figures that the Industry has not altogether benefited by the higher prices it has received since the war for its sugars, as with these higher prices have corresponded higher cost of production and increased taxation.

## GENERAL OBSERVATIONS.

The main factor to be considered in relation with the Sugar Industry of the Colony is that it is the sole industry of the Island.

From this industry is derived the total yearly income of the Colony. It is from this source, and from this source alone that must be found every year the money necessary for the life of the Colony and for its administration.

The whole of this yearly income of the Colony depends exclusively on the prices at which its sugars are sold in London.

As no other source of income is available to the Colony, the prices

at which such sugars are bought by the Home Government must therefore be sufficient to provide for :—

10. Increased cost of production due to the war.
20. Profits necessary to enable the Industry to recover from the precarious position it has found itself in for the last 15 years.
30. Margin of Taxation to cover the annual Government expenditure of the Colony.

10. Increased cost of production due to the war.

The cost of production has increased as the result of :

- (i) Increased cost of Materials.
- (ii) Increased cost of Labour.

(i) *Increased Cost of Materials.*

We have already shown the extent to which the cost of materials for the manufacture of the sugar and for its packing for export has increased during the war period.

The Mauritius Sugar Syndicate fixed an index value for the cost of such materials in 1941. This index value was communicated to the Ministry of Food, and was based on the cost price in the Colony at that time of such materials as :—

Fertilizers,  
Coal,  
Bags,  
Hardware,  
Lubricants, etc.

The rise of this index value every year has also been communicated to London.

The cost price of such materials locally at any of these periods is easily ascertainable.

(ii) *Increased Cost of Labour.*

As from 1929, the cost of labour has increased every year.

There exists no uniform rate of pay for the whole Island, conditions of work vary from district to district and often from estate to estate.

The Labour Department has furnished figures establishing the minimum rate of wages in 1939 and the increases in such rates which have been given effect to every year since. It should be observed that these figures constitute minimum rates of wages.



In point of fact, the cost of labour has risen in many places to much higher figures than the official figures sanctioned by the Department.

The acute shortage of labour due to the severe call on the available labour in the Colony for :

- (a) The Pioneer Corps
- (b) The National Labour Corps
- (c) Job contractors working for the War Services
- (d) Anti-Malarial Work

have compelled estates more specially affected to increase the wages much beyond the official figures, in order to obtain the number of hands indispensable for carrying out simultaneously their sugar crop and their food crops programme.

In many localities, the shortage of labour has been such that the foodcrops schedule could not be completed within the time limit and could only have been completed if the sugar crop had been suspended and the factory closed.

## 20. Profits.

The profits which the Industry should be able to dispose of must be sufficient :

- (a) *To allow for the liquidation of its Debts.*

It has already been stated that the indebtedness of the Sugar Industry, on the 30th June 1942, amounted to Rs. 43,922,000.

If the Industry is to return to stable conditions, this indebtedness must be paid off and the Industry must make sufficient profits to meet all its other contingencies and leave sufficient surplus for the liquidation of its debts.

- (b) *To allow the constitution of Reserves for Renewals after the War.*

The numerous Sugar Experts who have visited the Colony have always recognised the high standard of efficiency reached by the Colony in the manufacture of sugar.

Since the war began, only a reduced quantity of new machinery has been obtained.

As soon as new machinery is available again after the war, this will have to be obtained at any price if the same efficiency is to be maintained.

Unless the industry can be able to constitute reserves to meet such expenditure, the Industry will be bound to resort to loans and to find itself still further indebted to maintain its very existence.

Old and obsolete machinery must be replaced.

Improvements must be carried out from year to year, as in every other industry, if the Colony is to remain the most important sugar producing Colony of the Empire.

(c) *To allow for the reconditioning of soils impoverished for want of fertilisers during the war.*

There is no doubt that in the years following the war, a considerable increased intensive manuring of the land will have to be effected.

The soil of the Colony is already suffering from lack of sufficient fertilisers, and the cultivation of maize with 2 crops every year on more than 2/3 of the estates will reduce still further the fertility of the lands.

There is no new policy in this proposition: "Cultivation in the Colony is carried on with a high degree of skill and efficiency — and this efficiency also applies to the use of manures and fertilisers". (Watts' Report)

(d) *To provide sufficient Capital Expenditure to revert from Food Crops to Canes after the war.*

All estates over 200 Acres are now compulsorily cultivating 28% of their cane areas in foodcrops such as Maize, Manioc and Sweet Potatoes.

The experience gained during the last year has only confirmed what was known before: that such crops are unsuitable for the Colony.

Maize is particularly vulnerable to cyclones and droughts of small intensity which hardly affect sugar canes.

The yield that can be obtained is not more, on an average, than one Ton per acre every year, against an average yield of 2½ to 3 Tons of Sugar.

The cultivation of maize absorbs moreover more labour than the cultivation of sugar canes. One acre of maize (2 crops) requires 146 men per year, one acre of sugar cane (ratoons) 64 men.

Large areas of Sweet Potatoes have been devastated by some form of disease of this plant.

Sugar Estates will therefore have to revert to sugar canes as soon as war conditions will allow.

The replanting of 28 o/o of canes areas in canes will cost a large amount of money.

No compensation has been paid so far to the Sugar Estates for the cultivation of foodstuffs and there seems to be still less prospect that assistance of any kind will be given to them to meet the heavy capital expenditure for replanting sugar canes after the war.

Unless these estates can build up now sufficient reserves to meet such expenditure, the sugar production of the Colony will be seriously affected.

Moreover, the cultivation of foodstuffs with the poor yields obtained has resulted in serious loss to most of the planters.

(e) *Provision for heavy recurring losses due to cyclones and droughts.*

The following table will indicate the extensive losses to which the Sugar Industry is exposed, from time to time, but with unescapable certainty, from cyclones and droughts :

	Metric Tons of Sugar Produced.	Price per 100 Kilos.	Net Value of Crop in Rupees
1925	241.200	18.68	45,050.000
1926 cyclone	192.000	21.60	41,600.000
1930	220.960	12.08	26,700.000
1931 cyclone	164.000	12.02	19,720.000
1933	261.460	12.12	31,680.000
1934 drought	178.860	12.10	21,640.000
1938	321.500	12.03	38,458.000
1939 drought	229.400	13.86	31,770.000

Apart from these setbacks, the Colony has from time to time during this period suffered from both droughts and cyclones of minor intensity which are not specially referred to here.

Unless the estates can build up in favourable years a Security Fund to meet such losses, they are bound after each of these calamities to have recourse to Loans and to carry forward from year to year an increased burden of debts.

(f) *Sufficient return of Profits on Capital employed and invested in the Industry.*

This is self evident and self explanatory.

### 30. Margin of taxation.

The Sugar Industry fully realises the obligation which lies upon it to bear the burden of direct taxation which has become necessary in order to meet increased expenditure to ensure the war services and the defence of the Colony.

The Colony has accepted and the Council of Government has voted with dutiful purpose this increased taxation reviewed above.

The fact remains, however, that the Industry must bear alone this burden of taxation which cannot be spread over other sources of Revenue.

There is a limit, however, beyond which the Industry cannot go.

If the Colony is to meet from its own resources the total general expenditure of the Colony every year, this ever increasing expenditure must be compensated by a higher level in the price of our sugars.



Increased Taxation has become necessary :

- 1o. To subsidise foodstuffs in an endeavour to maintain the cost of living at a reasonable level.
- 2o. To meet the war expenditure.

*As to subsidisation it is to be noted :*

- A. That the cost of imported foodstuffs — as well as the cost of all raw materials — over which the Colony can have no control has risen in considerably greater proportion than the selling price of our sugars.
- B. That the subsidisation of foodstuffs for the Financial Year 1942/1943 has amounted to much more than Rs. 3,000,000 and the estimates for 1943/1944 amount to Rs. 3,500,000.

With reference now to the incidence of taxation, attention should be called to the following facts :—

- 1o. The application of Poll Tax, Surtax, Excess Profits Tax, as made at present is unfair, particularly to Sugar Estates, as no deduction from profits is allowed for renewals which, in the main, the Industry would have carried out but has been unable to do for the past three years owing to the shortage and, in many cases, complete lack of supplies. No deductions are allowed either for depreciation. The Colony is denied the advantages of these deductions which are applicable under the English laws.
- 2o. The " Standard Profit " allowed to Companies before the Excess Profits Tax is computed, calculated on the average profit for the three years immediately preceeding the war, in the case of Mauritius Sugar Companies, is very low. As a result of the continual fight the Industry has had to put up against low prices no Sugar Company in the Colony can be stated to have been working in normal trade conditions during these three years.
- 3o. The profits of these Companies during the war period are unduly swollen by the amounts which could not be spent, owing to war conditions on repairs and renewals. Had the estates been able to carry out their full renewal programmes, some of them would not have had to pay Excess Profits Tax at all. As a result, the profits now shown are fictitious and create a false impression among the public and perhaps even among persons interested in Sugar Estates themselves of the true position of the Industry.

It therefore follows that to the extent such taxes are paid on the sums which should have been deducted from the profits

for the reasons explained above, these taxes are in fact paid on capital, which is certainly not in the best interests of the economic life of the Island.

40. Estates have to suffer heavy losses from time to time, the result of cyclones and droughts.

Under the Poll Tax Ordinance, such losses can be carried forward for the next two years only, which is insufficient to redeem them.

In England, where trade and industry prosper under more stable conditions, losses can be carried forward for the next five years.

It is submitted therefore :

That in present circumstances, the actual amount shown as profits by the Industry for any one of the particular years of the war period cannot serve by itself as a true indication of the taxable capacity of the Industry.

It cannot be said whether or not the limit of taxation in Mauritius has been reached unless and until a more comprehensive examination of the question has been made, the various factors bearing on the matter having been duly considered.

A sufficient share of profits must be left in the hands of the Industry to counter unfavourable years and low prices and to make provision for capital expenditure which will have to be met in future years.

In other words, the Industry should be placed on a sound footing.

The Industry should not, as in the past fifteen years, be compelled to beg for assistance again and again from the Government and to resort to Loans in order to be able to carry on.

The whole administration of the Colony, the livelihood of its 450,000 inhabitants depend, for the present, exclusively on the Sugar Industry.

Unless due consideration be given to the points above submitted, and unless some effort be made to restore financial equilibrium of a permanent nature, there seems to exist no prospect for the Industry, for the labouring classes, or for the Colony of escaping from the anxious times they have been struggling through during the last fifteen or twenty years.

PH. RAFFRAY.

Port Louis, 9th October 1943.

## MAURITIUS HEMP PRODUCERS' SYNDICATE

*Rapport du Président pour l'année 1943.*

MESSIEURS,

L'an dernier, nous nous sommes réunis le 18 juin, et cette année nous avons pu devancer quelque peu l'Assemblée Générale, pour vous communiquer ce rapport, ainsi que l'état de situation de votre Syndicat arrêté au 31 décembre dernier, qui a été audité par le Gouvernement. Ces deux documents sont soumis à votre ratification.

Il n'y a pas lieu d'inclure dans ce rapport annuel les renseignements contenus dans les précédents, concernant la classification des fibres, le tableau comparatif des grades, ainsi que celui qui a trait aux exportations, car, comme vous le savez, la totalité de la production des fibres a été employée localement, par la Sacherie de Quatre-Bornes.

Nous notons avec plaisir que certaines filatures qui étaient restées inactives jusqu'ici ont repris le travail; c'est à souhaiter que dans un avenir rapproché toutes les filatures de l'île soient en plein fonctionnement.

Il est intéressant de donner la liste de toutes celles qui se sont mises à l'œuvre jusqu'ici :

Dans le District des Pamplemousses : Riche Terre, Trio, Mon Choisy.

Dans le District de Plaines Wilhems : Grande Rivière, Société de Roches Brunes, Plaines Wilhems S.E.C.L.

Dans le District de la Rivière Noire : Pierrefonds, Beau-Songe, Mon Repos, Caprice, Le Bosquet, Circonstance, Palmyre, Anna, Gros Cailloux, Réunion Ltd, Yémen Estate, Grande Rivière Noire, Petite Rivière Noire, Case Noyale, Petit Verger, Belle Vue, Belle Isle.

Soit 23 filateurs sur les 40 qui existaient à l'époque.

Comme vous le savez le M.H.P.S. a signé un contrat englobant la production estimée de chaque filature, pour l'année 1944, et qui se monte à un total d'environ 882 Tonnes, une clause a été ajoutée au dit contrat stipulant que cette quantité pourrait être augmentée au cas échéant jusqu'à concurrence de 1,500 T. Avec cette latitude, il est donc de notre avantage de travailler à plein rendement.

Le prix obtenu a été de Rs. 450.— pour le grade No. 1.

425.—	„	2.
400.—	„	3.

la tonne métrique, livrée à la G.S.F. aux Quatres-Bornes.



Les difficultés qui, par suite, ont surgi tant du côté de la main-d'œuvre, que des moyens de transport, et des pluies diluviennes qui se sont déversées sur l'île, ont été les causes principales du ralentissement de la production, les arrivages réduits ont causé de l'anxiété à la G.S.F., une circulaire vous fut adressée en conséquence, et nous constatons une fois de plus que les filateurs ont fait de leur mieux pour donner satisfaction à la Sacherie. Le beau temps aidant, nul doute que les expéditions de fibres à la G.S.F. reprendront bientôt leur cours normal.

Il nous est agréable d'ajouter une page des plus intéressantes aux annales de l'industrie textile.

La " Government Sack Factory " est en mesure d'absorber toute notre production actuelle de fibres et commence à réaliser l'espoir tant caressé par nos filateurs.

L'essor, qu'a déjà pris le tissage des toiles avec nos fibres, promet un développement encore plus considérable dans un avenir plein de promesses. Notre Industrie est entrée dans une phase d'évolutions efficaces, et quoique méconnue jusqu'ici, peut maintenant donner la preuve irréfutable du bien fondé de nos justes revendications d'antan. La réalité se fait jour, et nous pouvons d'une façon concluante faire comprendre à tous ceux qui étaient restés perplexes, le rôle important que l'industrie de la fibre d'aloès est appelée à exercer dans l'économie de notre petit pays.

Pendant deux ans déjà, notre industrie mère " Le Sucre " a utilisé avantageusement les sacs manufacturés par la Sacherie Gouvernementale et ce, à un prix de beaucoup inférieur à celui pratiqué pour les sacs de jute importés de la grande péninsule Indienne.

Ce modus operandi devait s'intensifier et avait été fortement préconisé en haut lieu, afin que l'Industrie Sucrière bénéficiant d'un traitement de faveur pendant une période indéterminée — prendrait en considération le prix élevé qui a cours actuellement (conséquence émanant de la situation anormale créée par la guerre) — pour les sacs de jute — tiendrait en ligne de compte le profit ainsi réalisé au détriment des filateurs, qui ne recevaient pas l'équivalent du prix susceptible d'être obtenu pour leurs fibres, si les sacs en fibres d'Aloès avaient été cotés à la parité de celui obtenu sur place, pour les sacs de jute ; en présence de quoi, l'Industrie Sucrière aurait pu garantir aux filateurs, pendant une période déterminée, un prix qui devait leur assurer le même profit qu'ils obtiennent actuellement pour leurs fibres, utilisant pour ce faire, le bénéfice réalisé comme indiqué plus haut.

Cette façon de procéder aurait eu pour résultat de stabiliser l'Industrie Textile, et permettre aux filateurs de faire face à toute baisse qui aurait pu se produire dans les cours du jute dans l'Inde, pendant la période d'après guerre, fléchissement qui n'aurait pas permis aux sacs produits localement, de concurrencer avantageusement ceux de provenance de l'Inde, si toutefois fléchissement il y avait !

Ces conditions n'ont pas rencontré l'unanime approbation des repré-

sentants de l'Industrie Sucrière, elles furent donc modifiées dans le sens suivant : pour obvier à toute difficulté qui aurait pu surgir dans l'avenir, il fut décidé que les sacs manufacturés avec nos fibres par la Sacherie des Quatre Bornes, seraient achetés par l'Industrie Sucrière au même prix que les sacs de jute à l'importation.

Dans ce cas également les filateurs ne devaient pas recevoir, pour leurs fibres, un prix en rapport avec celui qu'ils auraient été en droit de recevoir, toujours en tablant sur celui pratiqué pour les sacs de jute. Le prix d'acquisition des fibres par la Sacherie, étant fixé annuellement par le Comité nommé à cet effet, n'assurant aux filateurs qu'un profit raisonnable, et basé sur celui qu'ils réalisent actuellement.

La différence donc, entre le coût de production des sacs livrés par l'usine de Quatre-Bornes et le prix obtenu, suivant le cours des sacs de jute constituerait un bénéfice attrayant, et qui serait par le fait réalisé par la Sacherie.

Il découle de ce qui précède, que celle-ci, suivant ses Statuts mêmes, ne devait réaliser aucun profit, son but étant tout simplement de stabiliser la seconde Industrie du pays — elle se trouverait dans une situation toute différente, si le principe d'un système de procédure comme indiqué plus haut était adopté, lui permettant de réaliser des profits assez considérables.

La différence donc qui résulterait entre le coût de production des sacs d'aloès dont la matière première est achetée à un prix nominal, comme il est expliqué plus haut, et le prix obtenu ayant comme base le revient des sacs de jute à l'importation, devra être versée à un fonds de réserve spécial, et dont le Government Sack Factory devra tenir compte aux filateurs. Et il a été bien convenu que cette réserve spéciale serait uniquement employée dans l'avenir, dans le cas où un fléchissement des cours du jute se produisait dans l'Inde, que pour maintenir aux filateurs la même marge de profits qui leur est accordée actuellement sur la vente de leurs fibres à la Sacherie Gouvernementale.

Il est essentiel de noter également qu'il a été de plus convenu entre le Government Sack Factory et l'Industrie Sucrière, que la marge de profits réalisés antérieurement par l'Industrie Sucrière pendant la période d'acquisition des sacs d'aloès par celle-ci, à un prix inférieur à celui qui avait cours sur place pour les sacs de jute de mêmes dimensions, comme déjà stipulé plus haut, serait tenue en ligne de compte, et ce, à l'actif des filateurs, et ce crédit se monterait à une somme globale d'environ Rs. 250.000 (d'après les chiffres qui nous ont été communiqués par le Government Sack Factory.)

Le fonds de prévoyance qui sera ainsi constitué, dont le but principal est d'assurer aux filateurs dans l'avenir, un prix rémunérateur pour leur marchandise, — dans le cas où à la G.S.F. aurait à lutter contre une concurrence des sacs étrangers, — devra toutefois être employé, — si naturellement la concurrence à redouter ne se produisait pas, comme nous avons tout lieu de l'espérer — à aider financièrement le développement de l'In-

dustrie Textile — à des conditions qui devront être établies plus tard — et dans cet ordre d'idées, nous indiquerons : l'amélioration de l'outillage actuel des filatures, des moyens de transport, la destruction de l'herbe Condé nous permettant d'étendre les plantations d'agave &c. &c. &c. et en même temps d'aider à maintenir le M.H.P.S. qui se trouve être dépourvu de tous ses revenus par la cessation des exportations de fibres.

Il était aussi de toute justice que les flateurs soient tenus au courant de l'emploi au fur et à mesure de ce fonds de réserve spécial. Et quoique existant dans les livres de la " Government Sack Factory " ne devra jamais être englobé dans les revenus généraux de la Colonie, et que de plus les profits ainsi réalisés par le Government Sack Factory ne tomberaient pas sous les coups de la poll tax, ni de l'excess profit tax, pour la bonne raison, comme du reste nous l'avons déjà fait ressortir, ailleurs, les nouvelles industries sont exonérées de toutes taxes généralement quelconques, tablant ainsi avec la politique que veut adopter la Métropole et qui manifeste le désir de favoriser le plus possible le développement des industries secondaires dans l'empire.

Toutes ces conditions ont été discutées en assemblées générales, et il était de rigueur que je les confirme ici dans ce rapport.

La question de la concurrence dont notre Industrie pourrait être l'objet plus tard, par rapport au Jute, étant un facteur de grande préoccupation de part et d'autre et d'intérêt vital pour nous, nous voudrions ouvrir ici une parenthèse, et utiliser l'opinion émise par des experts, qui étaient venus à Maurice tout dernièrement comme touristes et qui eurent l'occasion d'étudier les possibilités d'emploi des sacs en fibres d'aloès, ils furent si bien impressionnés en présence de ces sacs, constatant leur qualité intrinsèque, qu'ils déclarèrent catégoriquement que ces sacs seraient susceptibles d'être employés avantageusement, et en maintes reprises pour l'emballage des céréales, et devraient obtenir un prix plus rémunérateur que celui du Jute.

Serions-nous donc des optimistes, en présence de cette déclaration désintéressée, si nous escomptions l'avenir pour pouvoir, au cas échéant, créer un marché à l'extérieur pour nos sacs en fibres d'aloès, dans le cas où même la production arrivait à dépasser la demande locale pour l'ensachage de nos sucres, ou bien dans le cas où nous serions concurrencés sur place, par les sacs de jute !

Nous serions justifiés, il me semble, à déclarer formellement, que nous ne devrions pas craindre la concurrence.

Présentement, nous avons à lutter avec des difficultés considérables et même parfois insurmontables ; renchérissement et raréfaction de la main d'œuvre et des moyens de transports, et surtout l'alarmante proportion qu'a prise l'extension de " l'herbe condé " à Maurice.

Ceci dit pour expliquer que si momentanément, toute extension de production est entravée, il arrivera un moment où faire se pourra, quand les difficultés énoncées auront été applanies.



Les filateurs aidés au moment opportun pourront, de pied ferme, envisager la possibilité d'augmenter leurs plantations d'agave, et la Government Sack Factory de son côté, d'augmenter sa capacité de production de sacs, comme je le disais au début de ce rapport, l'avenir est plein de promesses, et peut être envisagé avec confiance et fermeté.

Revenant à " l'herbe condé ", il m'est agréable de mentionner, qu'il découle d'une communication reçue de l'Honorable Directeur de l'Agriculture, que des démarches avaient été faites auprès du Gouvernement de Trinidad, pour que des recherches soient poussées activement concernant le développement de " l'herbe Condé " et de ses parasites dans les Indes Occidentales, et d'autre part, le Département d'Agriculture prépare actuellement ses batteries, pour que suivant les conditions locales, ce Département puisse se baser sur les indications reçues, pour activer biologiquement parlant, la destruction du " Condé ". Nous ne pouvons que souhaiter ardemment, que ces travaux de recherches soient couronnés de succès, ce qui nous permettra de nous débarrasser de cette peste.

Pour rendre plus complet ce rapport, j'ai pensé qu'il serait utile d'obtenir de la G.S.F., les renseignements ayant trait aux activités déployées tous ces temps derniers par la Sacherie, et ce qui suit, m'a été aimablement communiqué par le Manager de la G.S.F. avec l'assentiment du Président du Comité consultatif.

- (a) La production totale pendant l'année 1943 a été de :
  - 1.285.769 sacs de 55 kilos.
  - 3.934 yards de toile ordinaire.
  - 87.000 kilos de fils pour cordage.
  - 73.870 yards de toile pour filtre-presse.
- (b) Le prix obtenu a été de Rs. 43.50 les cent sacs
  - " " 0.55 la yard pour la toile ordinaire.
  - " " 0.85 " " pour filtre-presse
  - " " 0.70 le kilo pour le fil.
- (c) La capacité de production de la Sacherie est de 1.500.000 à 1.800.000 sacs de 55 kilos annuellement.
- (d) L'utilisation journalière de fibres est dans les environs de 4 à 4½ Tonnes.
- (e) Une certaine quantité de " Sisal " a été fournie aux fabricants de cordes et ficelles. Le " Sisal " d'après les expériences faites, convient mieux à tous les points de vue à la confection des cordages.

Les fibres de " Fourcroya " étant plus légères et plus souples, devraient servir exclusivement au tissage des toiles pour la manufacture des sacs. D'un autre point de vue, les pertes industrielles sont moindres dans le traitement des fibres de " Sisal ", mais il est avéré que les fibres de Fourcroya, se prêtent davantage au tissage et fournissent un tissu de beaucoup plus léger et plus souple que les toiles produites avec les fibres du " Sisal ".

- (f) Avec une fibre de qualité régulière, il est estimé que l'on pourrait récupérer 1.300 sacs (de contenance de 55 kilos) par tonne métrique, de fibres de Fourcroya.
- (g) L'agrandissement éventuel de la Sacharie ne peut être envisagé tout au moins pour le moment, attendu que la production de fibres n'atteint pas le volume qu'elle est en mesure d'absorber.
- (h) La classification des fibres reçues à la G.S.F. en 1943 a démontré qu'elles furent inférieures comme qualité à celles produites pendant le cours de l'année 1942.

Le Manager de la G.S.F. est d'avis, que les 10 tonnes de fibres " Raw " qui furent livrées en Angleterre, lors de l'expérience entreprise pour le tissage des toiles avec nos fibres brutes, étaient de qualité supérieure à la production actuelle, les machineries les ayant traitées à ce moment ont dû être réglées d'après la qualité des fibres à l'essai; ces machineries ayant à traiter actuellement des fibres inférieures, suscitent des ennuis continuels, qui entravent la production des sacs, et sont la cause d'un surenchérissement du coût de production, au détriment des producteurs de fibres, ce qui est très regrettable.

- (i) Le nombre de paires de bras employées par la G.S.F. se chiffre à 320.
- (j) La moyenne de son et de matières poussiéreuses contenus dans les fibres reçues en 1943, a été de 11 o/o — certaines fibres ne contenant que 7 o/o par contre d'autres atteignaient 15 o/o. Le Manager de la G.S.F. est d'opinion que les qualités inférieures au No. 1 devraient être pénalisées en conséquence, faisant ressortir que 8 o/o de Rs. 450. équivalent à Rs. 36. et la marge qui existe les Nos. 1 & 2 n'est que de Rs. 25.

Il ressort de ce qui précède que la G.S.F. a eu à se plaindre quelque peu de la qualité des fibres livrées en 1943. La fabrication des fibres comme on le sait dépend de beaucoup de facteurs, et principalement des conditions atmosphériques, et celles-ci n'ont pas été favorables pendant une grande partie de l'année dernière, et le récent cyclone que nous venons d'essuyer n'est certes pas venu arranger les choses, ce fut une nouvelle complication, et certes pas la moindre, à ajouter à une situation des plus embarrassantes. Il va sans dire que tous nos efforts tendent à donner satisfaction dans la mesure du possible, aussi bien quantitativement que qualitativement à la G.S.F.

D'autres renseignements complémentaires nous seront communiqués ultérieurement, tel que le prix de revient des sacs, &c., quand l'usine pourra travailler à plein rendement.

Nous devons retenir le paragraphe concernant l'utilisation locale des fibres de " Sisal " pour la fabrication des cordages et ficelles, nous avons déjà fait ressortir dans un rapport précédent, que les cordages fabriqués en Europe, avec du " Sisal " étaient employés par la marine de guerre,

aussi bien que la marine marchande, en remplacement du " Manila Rope ", quand il nous sera possible, après la destruction de l'herbe Condé — d'étudier la possibilité d'étendre nos plantations d'agave, nous devrions réserver une certaine superficie pour le " Sisal ", comme du reste cela a déjà été fait par notre collègue Raffray.

Le rendement en fibres de " Sisal " est supérieur à l'usine, et permet l'emploi de grattes automatiques.

Les filateurs ont consenti à augmenter la redevance à être payée au M.H.P.S. qui est actuellement de Rs. 4 — par tonne de fibres livrée aux Quatre-Bornes, et nous avons pu obtenir de la Sacharie une contribution de Rs. 1. — par tonne, ce qui porte à Rs. 5. — la somme que le Syndicat encaisse par tonne de fibres ajoutée aux autres revenus provenant de pressages divers, et location d'une partie de l'immeuble pour l'emmagasinage des sucres permet de faire face à la majeure partie des frais généraux actuels. Ceux-ci ont été réduits considérablement, par des mesures drastiques d'économie forcée.

Nous sommes en correspondance avec le Gouvernement pour l'obtention d'une autorisation de vendre certaines machineries et autres articles se trouvant dans le stock actuel dont nous pourrions nous dispenser suivant avis de notre conseiller technique, leur réalisation nous permettrait d'alléger le compte de Créanciers Divers du Syndicat.

### SENSIVIÈRE

Il y a de cela quelques années, nous fîmes parvenir des échantillons de fibres, produites après décortication des feuilles de " Sensivière ", les rapports furent des plus encourageants, mais le coût de production en était élevé.

À titre de renseignements, j'attire l'attention des filateurs sur un article qui vient d'être inséré dans le " Crown Colonist " dans son numéro de Mars dernier — nous voyons qu'un don de £ 50.000. — a été fait par le Gouvernement Impérial aux BAHAMAS, pour stimuler la culture et la production des fibres de " Sensivière ".

Les feuilles de cette plante peuvent être récoltées au bout de deux ans, ce qui serait très intéressant.

De plus une machine nouvelle aurait été construite en Amérique qui donnerait d'excellents résultats.

La Sensivière est originaire de Ceylan dit-on, ce que nous savons, c'est que cette plante croît partout à l'Île Maurice, on fabrique, paraît-il avec ses fibres, d'excellents cordages et tapis.

Il serait avantageux de produire une certaine quantité de ces fibres aux fins d'expérience par la Sacherie de Quatre-Bornes, ce serait peut-être pour nous le moyen d'augmenter notre production de fibres concurremment avec le " Fourcroya ".

Le rendement est de une tonne de fibres par arpent.



Le dernier cyclone, qui a évolué dans nos parages, a causé des dommages assez considérables, principalement aux cultures vivrières, la récolte sucrière subira également une réduction assez sensible, mais qui ne pourra être déterminée qu'au moment de la manipulation des cannes, pendant la prochaine coupe, la saison qui s'en est suivie a permis aux plantations de se relever quelque peu, dans certains districts ; mais les bourrasques sévissant pendant le mois d'Avril, étant toujours à craindre ; la teneur en sucre s'en ressentira certainement.

Notre Industrie Textile a eu à déplorer pas mal de dommages également, fibres détruites sur les sècheries, dans les rouissoirs, et en magasin ; toitures enlevées, cases d'habitation abbatues, feuilles d'agave peignées et chemins transformés en ornières creusées par les pluies diluviennes, ces pertes assez sensibles, sont venues compliquer une situation déjà très tendue, par suite du surenchérissement de tous les travaux généralement quelconques dû aux circonstances actuelles, entravant la production des fibres.

Pendant quelques années nous avons été épargnés, mais le dernier météore est venu nous rappeler les dangers que nous courrons chaque année pendant les périodes critiques.

La violence du cyclone a été un désastre pour nos voisins, le centre ayant passé sur l'Ile sœur, les dommages là-bas sont estimés à près de 70,000,000 de francs.

Les Mauriciens se souviendront de l'aide efficace, et spontanée qu'ils reçurent en pareille circonstance.

Nous aimons à penser que " l'Ile de la Réunion Relief Fund " institué sous les auspices de son Excellence le Gouverneur recevra un chaleureux accueil dans toutes les sections de la population Mauricienne, afin d'aider nos voisins dans la mesure de nos moyens.

Sir Donald a transmis à son Collègue de l'Ile sœur l'expression de nos sentiments de profonde sympathie à l'occasion de cette tragique épreuve. Tous ici présents, nous nous sommes associés de cœur au geste de Sir Donald, qui a reçu l'approbation de la communauté tout entière.

La grande guerre comptera bientôt cinq longues années pendant lesquelles des luttes titanesques se sont succédé sans répit, le conflit englobe le monde entier.

L'avance foudroyante de l'Armée Rouge et la mitraille qui pleut journellement sur les centres industriels de production d'engins de guerre des ennemis héréditaires, réduiront à néant nous l'espérons la horde des Nazis et de leurs satellites, et permettront bientôt aux armées victorieuses des nations unies, de libérer tous les peuples opprimés et humiliés par la force, et les réhabiliter dans une paix immuable basée sur le droit, la justice et la liberté dans un monde meilleur, et plus clairvoyant.

Messieurs, en terminant je n'ai plus qu'un cordial merci à adresser à tous mes collègues du Comité, en particulier à l'Honorable Bodkin, C.B.E. ainsi qu'à vous tous ici présents, pour l'appui et l'attention que vous

m'avez toujours accordés dans l'accomplissement de la tâche qui m'incombait.

J'adresse également mes remerciements au Secrétaire-Manager qui a su remplir avec dévouement et tact ses fonctions délicates, surtout par les temps difficiles que nous traversons.

Il m'est agréable aussi de mentionner que mon collègue J. H. G. Ducray et moi-même, vos délégués, dans le comité établi par le Gouvernement pour s'occuper des questions d'acquisition des fibres &c., n'avons eu qu'à nous louer des excellentes relations que nous avons entretenues avec les représentants du Gouvernement et de l'Industrie Sucrière.

P.S. Pour venir renforcer ce rapport, et le confirmer ; je propose l'adoption de la résolution spéciale que j'ai l'honneur de vous présenter, et qui j'espère rencontrera vos suffrages unanimes. Comme vous le savez un projet de résolution vous a déjà été soumis tout dernièrement, et je pense qu'il est opportun de l'adopter aujourd'hui, afin d'adresser une copie à la "Government Sack Factory", ainsi qu'au Secrétaire Colonial pour être remise à Son Excellence le Gouverneur de façon à ce que nos desiderata si nécessaires, soient contenus dans un bill qui sera présenté au Conseil du Gouvernement pour bien mettre les choses au point.

Une copie de la Résolution est annexée à ce Rapport.

J. RENÉ MAINGARD DE VILLE-ÈS-OFFRANS,

Président, M.H.P.S.

Port-Louis le 7 Juin 1944.

## RESOLUTIONS

At a general meeting of the Members of the Mauritius Hemp Producer's Syndicate held at the Chamber of Agriculture on Wednesday the 7th June 1944. The Members present were unanimous in voting the following Resolutions :

1o. It has been agreed between the Mauritius Government Sack Factory, the Bureau of the Chamber of Agriculture & The Mauritius Hemp Producer's Syndicate that all contracts entered into, will be made annually through The Mauritius Hemp Producers' Syndicate in the name and on behalf of each individual Hemp Supplier, prorata according to the capacity of production of the Sack Factory owned by each individual producer, and based on the total quantity required annually by the Government Sack Factory, for the purpose of manufacturing sacks.

2o. That each individual Hemp Producer will be responsible directly to the Government Sack Factory for the delivery of the full quantity of Raw Fibre which he has bound himself to supply, as per contract signed

on his behalf by the Mauritius Hemp Producers' Syndicate, for each calendar year.

30. The price to be paid for such Fibre will be in rupees per metric ton, delivery at Quatre-Bornes.

40. Such price will be determined year by year by the Committee appointed by Government and comprising 6 members, of whom 2 representatives of the Government Sack Factory, 2 representatives of the Mauritius Sugar Industry & 2 representatives of the Mauritius Hemp Producers' Syndicate.

50. The price of Raw Fibre to be paid by the Government Sack Factory will be fixed when the yearly average cost of production, including all expenses incurred in the production of such Fibre, will have been established, and also it was agreed that a minimum of Rs. 100. per metric ton over and above the said cost of production would be guaranteed to the Hemp Producers as a nominal profit.

60. The amount due to the Producer by the Government Sack Factory for fibre delivered at Quatre-Bornes, will be paid directly to the Producer.

70. Such payments to be effected every Wednesday in the subsequent week, for all fibre delivered during the preceeding week, i. e. from Monday 10 a.m. to Saturday 1 p.m.

*This being understood, it has been further agreed that :*

80. The Government Sack Factory has been established in order to stabilize the Hemp Industry and no profit whatsoever was to be made by this Institution.

90. All sacks manufactured by the G.S.F. with local Fibre were to be sold to the local Sugar Industry.

10. During the years 1941/42, 1942/43, 1943/44 it was proposed and accepted by the interested parties that such sacks should be sold to the Sugar Industry at COST PRICE.

The Sugar Industry during the said years has made a considerable saving as the cost of imported sacks was very much higher than that of the locally produced sacks.

In recognition of the considerable benefit it had thus derived, the Sugar Industry, in return, agreed to continue for a number of years in the post-war period to purchase the sack output of the G.S.F. which would ensure a minimum profit of Rs. 100. per metric ton to the Fibre Producers — even if the price for the local sacks was above the selling price of the imported sacks.

As a matter of interest, it is here recorded that, in accordance with information supplied by the G.S.F. — the total saving the Sugar Industry was able to make during the aforesaid years 1941/44 through purchasing local sacks instead of imported sacks was round about Rs. 250,000. (Two



hundred and fifty thousand rupees) an amount which normally should have made return to the Fibre Producers.

The Sugar Industry has now considered it advisable to put an end to the Agreement detailed above, and commencing from 1944/45 have expressed the desire to purchase local sacks at the same price as that of the imported Jute sacks from India.

This, on the basis of present cost of local sacks (cost established on present price paid by the G.S.F. to Hemp Producers for Raw Fibre) — as compared to present cost of imported sacks — will enable the G.S.F. to make a very substantial profit — whereas, it is recalled, that the basis of the original understanding was that the G.S.F. should operate on a “No profit basis” — all such profit to accrue to the Hemp Producers through the corresponding price to be paid to them for Raw Fibre.

It should here be noted that the Hemp Industry has met with considerable difficulties in the pre-war period to maintain its activities & that its maintenance was only due to the spirit of perseverance & tenacity of its Members, and that they would certainly be entitled to receive a more remunerative price for their fibre.

Notwithstanding, but without prejudice to the original understanding. The Mauritius Hemp Producers are ready to agree that all profits derived by G.S.F. should henceforth be paid in to a SPECIAL RESERVE FUND for the main purpose of stabilizing and in other ways benefiting the Fibre Industry, and to provide for subsidies in the future, in the event of the cost of imported sacks falling below that of the locally produced article — cost of the same based on a nominal profit of Rs. 100 — per ton of Raw Fibre for Producers.

This Reserve Fund to be administered by a Committee appointed by the Members of the Mauritius Hemp Producers' Syndicate.

It would also be imperative to obtain the assurance from Government that this “SPECIAL RESERVE FUND” thus created, would be absolutely free from all Taxes whatsoever — the policy of the Home Government being to promote all new Industries in the Colonies on a sound basis.

The Members of the Mauritius Hemp Producers' Syndicate beg to invite the kind and considerate attention of His Excellency the Governor to the suggestions contained in the above resolutions, & hope that they will receive his valuable support.

J. RENÉ MAINGARD DE VILLE-ÈS-OFFRANS,

*Président*

*Mauritius Hemp Producers Syndicate.*

## STATISTIQUES

## 10. PLUVIOMÉTRIE &amp; TEMPÉRATURE

## Pluviométrie (Pouces)

LOCALITÉS Mois	NORD							CENTRE					
	Grand' Baie	Pample-mousses	Pample-mousses (Normale)	Aber-crombie	Aber-crombie (Normale)	Ruisseau Rose	Belle Vue Maurel	Beau Bois (Moka)	Helvétia	Réduit	Réduit (Normale)	Curepipe*	Curepipe (Normale)†
Sept. 1944 ...	1.31	3.32	1.83	1.64	1.65	3.73	—	8.05	8.64	3.98	1.71	10.01	5.78
Oct. ...	1.78	2.53	1.95	1.22	1.11	2.08	3.91	5.84	6.94	2.45	1.91	5.83	4.52

LOCALITÉS Mois	EST				OUEST					SUD			
	Centre de Flacq	Camp de Masque	Palmar	G.R.S.E.	Port-Louis	Case Noyale	Beau-Bassin	Beau-Bassin (Normale)	Richelieu	Rose Belle	Richen-Eau	Camp Diable	Chemin Grenier
Sept. 1944 ...	5.12	10.88	2.08	3.57	1.76	0.57	2.27	0.85	1.55	14.97	10.50	9.89	7.40
Oct. „ ...	7.14	8.32	3.02	3.00	1.11	0.12	1.15	0.85	0.74	10.48	6.74	4.37	4.81

## Température °C

Localités	Abercrombie		Beau-Bassin		Réduit			
Mois	Max.	Min.	Max.	Min.	Max.	Min.	Moy.	Nor.
Sept. 1944 ...	27.9	18.2	25.8	17.1	23.0	16.8	19.6	18.7
Oct. „ ...	29.3	20.6	27.0	18.4	24.7	18.2	21.2	19.9

Collège Royal.

† Jardin Botanique.

## 20. Preliminary Compilation of the 1944 Sugar Crop.

Temperature remained markedly above normal during the period September to November, while rainfall was also considerably above normal in September and October but very deficient in November.

The total tonnage of cane reaped approximates 1,761 thousand metric tons, as against 1,888 estimated at the end of August.

The sugar made amounts to about 199.6 thousand metric tons, in defect by nearly 20 thousand tons or 9% of the revised estimate.

The distribution by districts and the comparison with previous years are as follows :—

(Unit : 1 thousand metric tons).

Districts	1944 Preliminary Compilation	1943	1942	1941	1940	1939
Pamplemousses and Riv. du Rempart ...	57.6	77.64	73.60	81.19	66.65	42.18
Flacq ...	30.4	45.74	51.53	50.58	51.67	34.74
Moka ...	23.9	40.29	40.42	37.90	37.83	29.65
Plaines Wilhems ...	14.8	23.42	23.92	25.09	24.09	17.81
Black River ...	8.5	13.49	15.07	17.42	13.84	9.75
Savanne ...	33.8	55.71	61.36	54.40	58.16	47.63
Grand Port ...	30.6	54.43	64.98	57.10	64.01	47.70
Total ...	199.6	310.72	330.88	323.68	316.25	229.46

9th December, 1944.

A. DE SORNAY,

*Statistician.*

Department of Agriculture.



## 30. YIELD OF MAIZE

October 1943, December 1943, January 1944, Feb.-March 1944  
Plantations.

<i>Estates</i>	<i>Kgs. Maize/arpent (at 12% moisture)</i>			
	Oct. 43	Dec. 43	Jan. 44	Feb.-March 44
<b>PAMPLEMOUSSES</b>				
Maison Blanche ...	—	—	364	280
Rosalie California ...	—	235	235	122
A. de St. Romain ...	—	—	488	340
Bois Rouge ...	—	468	—	142
Nouvelle Industrie ...	—	—	—	185
Belle Vue ...	—	—	—	375
Masilia Balaklava ...	—	—	—	145
Solitude ...	—	—	—	513
Weighted Average ...	—	402	326	370
<b>RIVIERE DU REMPART</b>				
Labourdonnais ...	—	419	419	—
Espérance Antelme ...	—	412	412	311
Rouillard & Cie. ...	—	—	167	—
Beau Séjour ...	300	—	525	530
Ravensthorpe ...	—	775	775	498
Saint Antoine ...	—	—	516	414
Settise ...	—	—	—	88
Australia ...	—	—	—	475
Mare Sèche ...	—	—	—	188
Weighted Average ...	300	258	422	470
<b>FLACQ</b>				
Constance ...	—	370	370	—
Union Flacq ...	—	—	40	134
Deep River ...	—	61	61	57
La Caroline ...	—	177	—	—
Beau Champ ...	—	—	—	176
Teeluck Bros. ...	—	—	—	400
La Lucie ...	—	—	—	200
Weighted Average ...	—	265	214	154

<i>Estates</i>	<i>Kgs. Maize/arpent (at 12% moisture)</i>			
	Oct. 43	Dec. 43	Jan. 44	Feb.-March 44
<b>MOKA</b>				
Alma ... ..	80	—	—	—
I. Cassam & Co. ... ..	—	—	131	—
Chantenay ... ..	—	236	—	41
Rich Fund ... ..	—	—	—	374
Weighted Average ...	80	236	46	315
<b>PLAINES WILHEMS</b>				
Pierrefonds ... ..	—	345	—	150
Highlands ... ..	556	556	556	400
Réunion ... ..	—	—	—	47
Weighted Average ...	556	510	556	374
<b>BLACK RIVER</b>				
Médine ... ..	300	300	300	369
Chébel ... ..	240	—	—	122
Gros Cailloux ... ..	343	147	248	250
Plaines Wilhems ... ..	103	38	—	—
Tamarin ... ..	—	—	136	—
Weighted Average ...	250	286	270	331
<b>SAVANNE</b>				
Bel Ombre ... ..	359	478	545	337
Bénarès ... ..	462	737	491	533
Bel Air ... ..	511	—	511	302
Ruxa ... ..	511	—	511	561
Britannia ... ..	408	536	408	441
Saint Aubin ... ..	326	659	277	484
Union Ducray ... ..	—	542	—	294
Savannah ... ..	—	639	567	345
Joli Bois ... ..	150	150	150	—
Terracine ... ..	271	396	280	290
Rivière des Anguilles ... ..	603	603	603	—
Weighted Average ...	337	524	492	391

	Oct. 43	Dec. 43	Jan. 44	Feb.-March 44
GRAND PORT	—	—	—	—
Savinia ... ..	154	154	154	154
Mon Trésor Mon Désert ...	—	372	230	255
Union Vale ... ..	105	192	111	28
Beau Vallon ... ..	—	229	229	252
Anse Jonchée ... ..	—	200	200	—
Ferney ... ..	—	—	—	10
Eau Bleue ... ..	—	—	—	10
Ragoobur Gunga... ..	—	—	—	30
Weighted Average ...	121	238	200	158

*Summary of maize Yield.*

	Oct. 43	Dec. 43	Jan. 44	Feb.-March 44
Pamplemousses ... ..	—	402	326	370
Rivière du Rempart ...	300	258	422	470
Flacq ... ..	—	265	214	154
Moka ... ..	80	236	46	315
Plaines Wilhems ... ..	556	510	556	378
Black River ... ..	250	286	270	351
Savanne ... ..	337	524	492	391
Grand Port ... ..	121	238	200	158
Weighted Average				
Whole Island ...	293	377	367	333



## NOTICE

Examinations in Sugar Manufacture of the City and Guilds  
of London Institute, 1945.

Intermediate and Final Examinations in Sugar manufacture of the City and Guilds of the London Institute will take place at the Mauritius Agricultural College on Tuesday, 1st May 1945.

Intending candidates should send in their application to the Director of Agriculture not later than 31st December 1944 and must forward the fee for examination which has been fixed at Rs. 8 for the Intermediate and Rs. 9 for the Final examination.

The syllabus of these examinations may be obtained on application to the Director of Agriculture.

G. E. BODKIN,  
Director of Agriculture.

Mauritius Agricultural College,  
Rduit,  
25th November 1944.

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